

# CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM



MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER



[www.addisonpoliceillinois.org](http://www.addisonpoliceillinois.org)



June 2009

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and this workbook were originally developed by Timothy L. Zehring, the Crime Free Programs Supervisor of the Mesa, Arizona Police Department.

The Addison Police Department, a CALEA accredited department, is committed to the philosophy of Community Policing. The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program provides the opportunity for the Police Department and the Community Development Department to work hand in hand with landlords and managers to eliminate crime from their property.

Thanks are extended to the Village Manager and the elected officials of the Village of Addison for not only supporting this program, but for their vision and concern for the quality of life for all residents of the Village. In 2009, the Village Board approved the ordinance requiring all rental property owners to participate in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Most importantly, thanks are extended to you, the rental property owner/manager. Municipal government and law enforcement are charged with public safety and quality of life maintenance. However, the most important component in the rental equation is you. You have the ability to find and rent to GOOD tenants. You have the ability to resolve problems through evictions and non-renewals. The bottom line is that YOU hold the key to the success of this program. The rest of us stand ready to assist and support you.

This manual was adapted and revised for the Village of Addison by the Addison Police Department Community Response Unit. It is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information about subject matters addressed. The Village of Addison offers this program as a community service for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of criminal activity in rental communities. It is presented with the understanding that the Village of Addison and the Addison Police Department are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional service, other than crime prevention education. **If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.**

Thank you for your commitment to quality rental properties.

Addison Police Department

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## Overview

Rental properties present a unique challenge for law enforcement. The typical Neighborhood Watch approach to residents in single-family homes is not easily adapted to rental communities. In single-family homes, owners generally have a large cash investment in the purchase of their home. This motivates owners to a greater concern about crime in their neighborhoods. With rising crime rates come lowering property values.

An owner of a single-family home might also be looking at a long term of residency. Typically, homeowners have a thirty-year mortgage for their property. Home is where they come each day, perhaps, to raise a family. There tends to be a lot of pride and ownership of their property. When crime problems begin to appear, owners are very likely to organize Neighborhood Watch activities to protect the long-term interests of their families.

In rental properties, the communities tend to be much more transient. Most often, residents sign a six-month, nine-month or a twelve-month lease for a rental property. In many cases, owners don't even require leases, and residency is based on a month-to-month agreement. This allows for an occupant to move very easily if they feel crime has reached a level they will not tolerate. It is easier to move away from crime than to confront it.

The police have historically fought a losing battle with Neighborhood Watch in multi-family rental properties. In January of 1992, the Mesa Police Department was faced with a difficult decision – to no longer offer Neighborhood Watch training in rental properties or to develop a new concept for crime prevention in the rental communities.

The result was the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM**. This bold new program had no precedent. The program's concept was to take a multi-faceted approach to crime prevention. A unique coalition of police, property managers and residents of rental properties, the program was to be an on-going program with a three-phase approach to address all of the opportunities of crime in rental property.

The program was designed to include a certification process never before offered by a police department. The incentives of police-issued signs, certificates, and advertising privileges provided immediate interest in the program.

The development of the **Crime Free Lease Addendum** proved to be the backbone of the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM**. This addendum to the lease agreement lists specific criminal acts that, if committed on the property, will result in the immediate termination of the resident's lease.

The **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** achieved almost instant success. In rental properties with the highest crime rates, the immediate results showed up to a 90% reduction in police calls for service. Even in the best properties, reductions of 15% to 20% were not uncommon.

The **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** began to spread nationally after the first year and internationally after the second year. The **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** has been a success all across the United States and Canada.



## Summary

The CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM is successful because it approaches crime on many fronts. The police cannot solve crime problems alone. Neither can the management or residents of rental properties. By working together, the end result has been the most successful approach to crimes in rental communities.

There are three ways criminal activity comes into a rental community. The criminal lives there, they visit friends there, or they come to the property to commit crimes. The CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM addresses all three of these possibilities. By not renting to people with criminal intent, property managers not only reduce the likelihood of crime in the community, they also reduce the number of visitors who come to the property with criminal intent, i.e.: to purchase drugs.

For the opportunistic criminal, the use of C.P.T.E.D. (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) has been used to combat crimes that might occur in the parking lots or common areas. This includes assaults, robberies, drive-by shootings, and auto thefts.

If the police, property managers and residents will make a dedicated effort to crime prevention and the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM, the outlook for success is extremely high. Good luck on your endeavors to make your community a safer place to live and enjoy for many years to come.

The Village of Addison, as of the 2010 census, has 3,944 renter-occupied housing units. The average household family members total 3.01, making the total estimated population of renter-occupied housing 11,871. If the total population was roughly 37,000 residents, that would mean 32% of the population was living in renter-occupied housing. At first glance, it does not appear that a large portion of people live in rental units. As a manager, one must always take into account that those 11,871 residents live in very close quarters with other residents. Those residents may not have a backyard, garage or basement. Those residents will be using your property, common area, playground, swimming pool and other common areas to spend their time. There is a decrease in the level of responsibility and ownership when renting units as opposed to owning them. You, the property manager, are responsible for repairs, safety, upkeep and all other matters. When you view the residents in this manner, 11,871 people can cause a lot of damage and cost a management company a lot of money.

Every rental property wants more police patrol and more attention. The fact of the matter is, there are never going to be enough police officers to go around all the time. Even if the beat officer in your area did not receive a call for service all shift long, the officer would only be able to patrol your complex at the most three times during one shift. The officer has responsibilities to other areas as well and must equally patrol their beat. With a population so high in such a small area, it is your responsibility to recognize problems and work cooperatively with the police department to help resolve those issues. If there is always the opinion that it is the responsibility of the police, then there again is no ownership, and with no ownership, there is no resolution. Since the police cannot be on the property 24 hours a day, you are a useful tool in informing them of any situations on the property.

ORDINANCE NO. 0-09-02

**ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS  
OF CHAPTER 10 OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON CODE  
RE ISSUANCE OF RENTAL DWELLING LICENSE**

WHEREAS, Section 6(a) of Article VII of the 1970 constitution of the State of Illinois provides that any municipality which has a population of more than 25,000 is a home rule unit, and the Village of Addison, DuPage County, Illinois, with a population in excess of 25,000 is, therefore, a home rule unit and, pursuant to the provisions of said Section 6(a) of Article VII, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs, including, but not limited to, the power to tax and to incur debt; and

WHEREAS, the Village requires persons who rent residential units within the Village to secure a license from the Village; and

WHEREAS, the exchange of information between landlords and the Police Department assists in reduction of the level of crime in rental units; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Board of Trustees believe and hereby declare that it is in the best interests of the Village to amend the Village Code as follows in order to reduce the level of crime in rental units;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON, DU PAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS HOME RULE POWERS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE: The foregoing recitals are hereby incorporated in this Section One as if said recitals were fully set forth herein.

**Sec. 10-84. Additional Conditions for Issuance of License.**

- (A) Any owner of a property that is being rented or leased out for residential purposes (excluding hotels, motels and individual rooms) shall attend and complete a Village of Addison Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar (the "Seminar"). The owner, agent or designee shall attend the Seminar prior to obtaining or being issued a Village residential operator license. Any lessor who was required to have a Residential Rental License on or after May 1, 2009 shall have until November 1, 2010 to attend the Seminar. In the event such a Seminar is not offered prior to issuance of the Residential Rental License, a conditional license may be issued subject to the owner, agent or designee attending the Seminar within three months of the issuance of the license. In the event a Seminar is not attended within three months, the license shall be void.
- (B) A property manager shall be considered an agent of the owner. A new manager shall have three months from the date of hire to attend the Seminar. A new property owner shall have three months from the date of purchase of the property to attend the Seminar. (Ord. 13-09)
- (C) The Crime Free Multi-Housing Coordinator, as designated by the Chief of Police, shall provide the Director of Community Development with a list of owners, agents and/or designees who have attended the Seminar, with the date of attendance and verification that the owner, agent or designee has complied with the provisions of this section and is eligible to obtain, maintain or renew the Residential Rental License.
- (D) Any owner or agent of a residential rental property or their designee is required to utilize a crime free lease addendum (see Appendix 10-84 to Chapter 10 of the Village Code) or to provide a clause in the lease similar to the crime free lease addendum for any lease executed after May 1, 2009. The Crime Free Multi-Housing Coordinator shall provide, at no cost, samples of the crime free lease addendum and shall submit such clauses within actual leases to the Village Attorney for review and approval. The clause is intended to consider criminal activity engaged by, facilitated by or permitted by the renter, member of the household, guest or other party under the control of the renter a lease violation. The landlord shall have authority under said clause to initiate an eviction proceeding as specified in the Illinois Forcible Entry and Detainer statutes. Proof of criminal violation shall be by a preponderance of the evidence. With respect to oral rental agreements, the crime-free lease addendum shall be deemed to be incorporated into such oral agreements as a matter of law. (04-40; 09-02; 10-26; 11-17)



SECTION THREE: Subsection (A) of Section 10-86 of Chapter 10, Article XIII, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison shall be and is hereby amended in its entirety so that said Subsection 10-86(A) shall hereafter be and read as follows:

- (A) Whenever, upon inspection of the licensed rental dwelling or rental dwelling unit, it is determined by the appropriate officials of the Village of Addison that conditions or practices exist which are in violation of the provisions of this or any applicable ordinance of the Village of Addison, including, without limitation, Section 10-86.1 hereinbelow, Chapter 12 or Chapter 24 of the Village Code, the official making the determination shall serve the owner or agent with a notice of violation. Such notice shall identify the specific violations and state that unless they are corrected within the time specified in the notice the operating license may be suspended. Notice pursuant to this section shall be sent by U. S. mail to or hand delivered to the party designated in the application to receive notices or process or their authorized representative.

In addition and notwithstanding anything to the contrary set forth within this code, valid complaints regarding a non-responsive licensee shall be processed as follows: after a tenant has notified the licensee or his designated representative of a code violation regarding their dwelling unit, the licensee has an obligation to resolve the matter within a reasonable timeframe. If the Village is notified of the failure of the licensee to comply, they will investigate the same. If the complaint is valid the licensee shall be responsible for the payment of the inspection costs incurred by the Village and any subsequent reinspection costs. The licensee shall pay said costs within fifteen (15) days of notification of such inspection or reinspection. Such notification shall be either by the service of an inspection report indicating the fee or of a letter either mailed or hand delivered. Should the licensee fail to pay said costs in a timely manner, said failure shall be a violation of this Article and the licensee shall be subject to additional penalties as hereinafter set forth.

SECTION FOUR: A new Section 10-86.1 shall be and is hereby added to Chapter 10, Article XIII, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, which new Section 10-86.1 shall hereafter be and read as follows:

**Sec. 10-86.1. Nuisance Residential Rental Property.**

It is hereby declared a nuisance and against the health, peace and comfort of the Village and its residents for any property owner, agent or manager to suffer or permit the following: (1) rental of a residential unit or residential building within an apartment community or governed by a homeowner's association to a tenant who allows any of the following offenses to occur relating to the tenant, member of the tenant's household, guest or other party under control of the tenant to occur: murder, kidnapping, aggravated kidnapping, prostitution, solicitation of prostitution, pandering,



obscurity, child pornography, sale of obscene publication, criminal housing management, possession of explosives, unlawful use of weapons, sale of firearms, gambling, keeping a gambling place, concealing a fugitive, violation of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, violation of the Cannabis Control Act, or commission of any two or more of any other felonies or Class A misdemeanors under the laws of the State of Illinois or the federal government not specifically listed above; or (2) rental of a residential unit or residential building within an apartment community or governed by a homeowner's association to a tenant who allows any of the following offenses to occur relating to the tenant, member of the tenant's household, guest or other party under control of the tenant to occur: commission of three or more Village ordinance violations in a six month period or an unreasonably high number of calls for police service, including, but not limited to, calls that may fall within the descriptions listed above that, when compared to other properties in the Village of similar type, reasonably indicate that the activity at the property is out of character for the area and is impacting the quality of life of those in the area.

SECTION FIVE: Subsection (B) of Section 10-88 of Chapter 10, Article XIII, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison shall be and is hereby amended in its entirety so that said Subsection 10-88(B) shall hereafter be and read as follows:

- (B) In addition to license suspension or revocation, a licensee shall further be subject to the penalties provided in Chapters 12 and 24 of this Village Code with respect to violations of those Chapters.

SECTION SIX: Appendix 10-86, attached to this ordinance, shall be and is hereby approved and shall be incorporated in the Village Code as an Appendix to Chapter 10 of the Village Code.

SECTION SEVEN: Any ordinance, resolution, policy, or part thereof which conflicts with the provisions of this ordinance is hereby expressly repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION EIGHT: This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage, approval and publication in the manner provided by law.

PASSED THIS 2nd day of February, 2009.

AYES: Trustee Humdley, Layne, Lynch, McDermott, Theodore, Venstra

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

APPROVED THIS 2nd day of February, 2009.

ATTEST:

Lucila A. Zucchero  
Village Clerk

James A. Hartung  
Mayor

PUBLISHED: 2/5/09

LKL136170114/08



ORDINANCE NO. O-15-23

**ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF CHAPTERS  
10 AND 12 OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON CODE**

WHEREAS, Section 6(a) of Article VII of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois provides that any municipality which has a population of more than 25,000 is a home rule unit, and the Village of Addison, DuPage County, Illinois, with a population in excess of 25,000 is, therefore, a home rule unit and, pursuant to the provisions of said Section 6(a) of Article VII, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs, including, but not limited to, the power to tax and to incur debt; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Board of Trustees believe and hereby declare that it is in the best interests of the Village and its residents to amend certain provisions of Chapters 10 and 12 of the Village Code as hereinafter set forth;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON, DU PAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS HOME RULE POWERS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE: The foregoing recitals are hereby incorporated in this Section One as if said recitals were fully set forth herein.

SECTION TWO: A new Subsection 10-84(E) shall be and is hereby added to Chapter 10, Article VIII of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, which Subsection 10-84(E) shall hereafter be and read as follows:

- (E) Any owner, agent or designee may be required to attend and complete a four-hour Village of Addison Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar Refresher Course pursuant to Section 12.38, Judicial Remedies, if in violation of Section 12.35, Chronic Nuisance Property.

SECTION THREE: A new Subsection 12-38(G) shall be and is hereby added to Chapter 12, Article VI of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, which Subsection 12-38(G) shall hereafter be and read as follows:

- (G) The court may order the owner's, agent's, or designee's Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar certificate be suspended if the owner, agent or designee does not attend and complete an Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar Refresher Course within three (3) months from the court date. If owner, agent, or designee attended a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar in a town other than Addison, Illinois, their exemption privilege will be suspended, if they do not attend and complete an Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar Refresher Course within three (3) months from the court date.

SECTION FOUR: The remaining portions of said Chapters 10 and 12 that have not been expressly amended herein shall be and are hereby ratified and affirmed and shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION FIVE: Any ordinance, resolution, policy, or part thereof that conflicts with the provisions of this ordinance is hereby expressly repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION SIX: This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage, approval and publication in the manner provided by law.

PASSED THIS 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015

AYES: Justin Hendley, Laine, Lynch, Mc Dermott & Theodore

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Freddie Klusany

APPROVED THIS 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

ATTEST:

Freddie A. Zuckero  
Village Clerk

[Signature]  
Mayor

PUBLISHED: 5/19/15

JM\176359\4/16/15





**ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF CHAPTERS  
10 AND 12 OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON CODE**

WHEREAS, Section 6(a) of Article VII of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois provides that any municipality which has a population of more than 25,000 is a home rule unit, and the Village of Addison, DuPage County, Illinois, with a population in excess of 25,000 is, therefore, a home rule unit and, pursuant to the provisions of said Section 6(a) of Article VII, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs, including, but not limited to, the power to tax and to incur debt; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Board of Trustees believe, and hereby declare, that it is in the best interests of the Village to amend certain provisions of Chapters 10 and 12 of the Village Code of the Village of Addison;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF ADDISON, DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS HOME RULE POWERS, AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION ONE:** The foregoing recitals are hereby incorporated in this Section One as if said recitals were fully set forth herein.

**SECTION TWO:** The Addendum to Section 10-84, Crime Free Lease Addendum, of Chapter 10, Article XIV, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, shall be and is hereby amended to add a new Paragraph 9 so that said Paragraph 9 shall hereafter be and read as follows:

9. In the case of a conflict between the provisions of this addendum and any controlling state or federal law, including Public Act 97-441 (65 ILCS 5/1-2.1-5) and Public Act 97-1150 (735 ILCS 5/9-106.2), the controlling state or federal law shall govern.

**SECTION THREE:** Section 10-86.1 of Chapter 10, Article VIII, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, shall be and is hereby amended in its entirety so that said Section 10-86.1 shall hereafter be and read as follows:

**Sec. 10-86.1. Nuisance Residential Rental Property.**

It is hereby declared a nuisance and against the health, peace and comfort of the Village and its residents for any property owner, agent or manager to suffer or permit the rental of a residential unit or residential building within an apartment community or governed by a homeowner's association (the "Property") to a tenant who commits, or allows to be committed by a member of the tenant's household, guest, or other party under the control of the tenant, acts which would cause the Property to become a chronic nuisance property under Article VI of Chapter 12 of the Addison Village Code.

**SECTION FOUR:** Article VI of Chapter 12, of the Village Code of the Village of Addison, shall be and is hereby amended in its entirety so that said Article VI shall hereafter be and read as follows:

**Sec. 12-35. Violation.**

- (A) It shall be unlawful for any property within the Village to become or remain a chronic nuisance property in violation of this Article.
- (B) It shall be unlawful for any person or person in charge to:
  - (1) Suffer or permit a property to become a chronic nuisance property; and
  - (2) Allow a property to continue as a chronic nuisance property.
- (C) Each day on which a violation of this Article continues shall be considered a separate and distinct offense.

**Sec. 12-36. Definitions.**

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this Article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this Section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

**Director of Police** means the Director of Police of the Village of Addison or his designee.

**Chronic nuisance property** means property upon which three or more nuisance activities have occurred within a 12-month period as a result of any three separate factual events that have been independently investigated by any law enforcement agency.

**Control** means the ability to regulate, restrain, dominate, counteract, or govern conduct that occurs on that property.

**Nuisance activities** means any of the following activities, behaviors, or conduct, as defined by federal, state, or Village ordinance:

- (1) Disorderly conduct as defined in 720 ILCS 5/26-1.
- (2) Unlawful use of weapons as defined in 720 ILCS 5/24-1 *et seq.*
- (3) Mob action as defined in 720 ILCS 5/25-1.
- (4) Discharge of a firearm as defined in 720 ILCS 5/24-1.2 and 1.5.
- (5) Gambling as defined by 720 ILCS 5/28-1.
- (6) Possession, manufacture, or delivery of controlled substances as defined by 720 ILCS 5/70/401 *et seq.*
- (7) Public indecency as defined by 720 ILCS 5/11-9.
- (8) Assault or battery or any related offense as defined in 720 ILCS 5/12-1 *et seq.*
- (9) Sexual abuse or related offense as defined in 720 ILCS 5/12-15 *et seq.*
- (10) Prostitution as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-14 *et seq.*
- (11) Criminal damage to property as defined in 720 ILCS 5/21-1 *et seq.*

- (12) Possession, cultivation, manufacture, or delivery of cannabis as defined in 720 ILCS 550/1 *et seq.*
- (13) Illegal consumption or possession of alcohol as defined in 235 ILCS 5/1 *et seq.*
- (14) Criminal housing management as defined in 720 ILCS 5/12-5.1.
- (15) Structure unfit for human occupancy as defined in the Village's Property Maintenance Code.
- (16) Unsafe structure as defined in the Village's Property Maintenance Code.
- (17) Unlawful structure as defined in the Village's Property Maintenance Code.
- (18) Multiple and serious violations of the Village's Property Maintenance Code continuing after disposition of a housing court complaint for those violations.
- (19) Activity that constitutes a violation of a felony or Class A misdemeanor pursuant to a federal or Illinois statute.

**Owner** means any person, partnership, land trust, or corporation having any legal or equitable interest in the property. Owner includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) A mortgagee in possession in who is vested:
  - (a) All or part of the legal title to the property.
  - (b) All or part of the beneficial ownership and the rights to the present use and enjoyment of the premises.
- (2) An occupant who can control what occurs on the property.
- (3) Any person acting as an agent of an owner as defined herein.

**Permit** means to suffer, allow, consent to, acquiesce by failure to prevent, or expressly assent or agree to the doing of an act.

**Person** means any natural person, association, partnership, corporation, or other entity capable of owning, occupying, or using property in the Village.

**Person in charge** means any person in actual or constructive possession of a property, including but not limited to, an owner, occupant of property under his or her ownership or control.

**Property** means any real property, including land and that which is affixed, incidental, or pertinent to land, including but not limited to, any premises, room, house, building, or structure, or any separate part or portion thereof, whether permitted or not.

#### **Sec. 12-37. Procedure.**

When the Director of Police of the Village receives one or more police reports documenting the occurrence of a nuisance activity on or within a property, the Director of Police shall independently review such reports to determine whether they describe nuisance activities.

Upon such findings, the Director of Police may:

- (A) Notify the owner and the person in charge in writing that the property is in danger of becoming a chronic nuisance property. The notice shall contain the following information:
  - (1) The street address or legal description sufficient for identification of the property.

- (2) A statement that the Addison Police Department has information that the property may be a chronic nuisance property, with a concise description of the nuisance activities that may exist or that have occurred.
  - (3) Service shall be made either personally or by first class mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, addressed to the person in charge at the address of the property believed to be a chronic nuisance property, or such other place which is likely to give the person in charge notice of the determination by the Director of Police.
  - (4) A copy of the notice shall be served on the taxpayer of record at such address as shown on the tax rolls of the county and/or the occupant, at the address of the property, if these persons are different from the person in charge, and shall be made either personally or by first class mail, postage prepaid.
  - (5) The failure of any person to receive notice that the property may be a chronic nuisance property shall not invalidate or otherwise affect the proceedings under this Article.
- (B) Should the owner or person in charge fail to prevent the property from becoming a chronic nuisance property, the Director of Police or his designee may commence proceedings to abate the nuisance conditions. The Village shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to pursue nuisance abatement proceedings either in the Circuit Court of DuPage County, or through administrative adjudication of building and housing violations (as provided in Article III of Chapter 30 of this Municipal Code).

**Sec. 12-38. Judicial Remedies.**

- (A) In the event the Village pursues a judicial abatement remedy and in the event that a court determines a property to be a chronic nuisance property, the court may order that the property be closed and secured against all use and occupancy for a period of time determined by the court or the court may employ any other remedy deemed by it appropriate to abate the nuisance.
- (B) In addition to the remedy provided in Subsection (A) above, the violator shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$750.00 nor more than \$1,000 per day, payable to the Village of Addison, for each day the owner or his agent had actual knowledge that the property was a public nuisance property and permitted the property to remain a public nuisance property.
- (C) In determining what remedy or remedies to employ, the court may consider evidence of other conduct that has occurred on the property, including, but not limited to:
- (1) The disturbance of neighbors.
  - (2) The occurrence of other nuisances on or from the property.
  - (3) The property's general reputation and/or the reputation of persons in or frequenting the property.
- (D) The court may authorize the Village to physically secure the property against use or occupancy in the event the owner fails to do so within the time specified by the court. In the event that the Village is authorized to secure the property, all costs reasonably incurred by the Village to affect the closure shall be made and assessed as a lien against the property and debt to the Village. As used herein, "costs" mean those costs actually incurred by the village for the physical securing of the property.

- (E) The Village Building Department employee effecting the closure shall prepare a statement of costs, and the Village shall thereafter submit said statement to the court for its review. If no objection to the statement is made within the period described by the court, a lien in said amount may be recorded against said property.
- (F) Any person who is assessed the cost of closure and/or civil penalty by the court shall be personally liable for the payment thereof to the Village.
- (G) The court may order the owner's, agent's, or designee's Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar certificate be suspended if the owner, agent or designee does not attend and complete an Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar Refresher Course within three (3) months from the court date. If owner, agent, or designee attended a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar in a town other than Addison, Illinois, their exemption privilege will be suspended, if they do not attend and complete an Addison Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Seminar Refresher Course within three (3) months from the court date. (Ord. No. 15-23)

**Sec. 12-39. Domestic or Sexual Violence/Disability Exception**

Pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/1-2-1.5, the term "nuisance activity" as used in this Article shall not include:

- (A) contact made to police or other emergency services, if (i) the contact was made with the intent to prevent or respond to domestic violence or sexual violence; (ii) the intervention or emergency assistance was needed to respond to or prevent domestic violence or sexual violence; or (iii) the contact was made by, on behalf of, or otherwise concerns an individual with a disability and the purpose of the contact was related to that individual's disability; or
- (B) an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence or sexual violence against a tenant, household member, or guest occurring in the dwelling unit or on the premises; or
- (C) criminal activity or a local ordinance violation occurring in the dwelling unit or on the premises that is directly relating to domestic violence or sexual violation, engaged in by a tenant, member of a tenant's household, guest, or other party, and against a tenant, household member, guest or other party.

**Sec. 12-40.**

In the case of a conflict between the provisions of Sections 12-35 through 12-39 above and any controlling state or federal law, including Public Act 97-441 (65 ILCS 5/1-2.1-5) and Public Act 97-1150 (735 ILCS 5/9-106.2), the controlling state or federal law shall govern.

**SECTION FIVE:** All policies, resolutions and ordinances of the Village of Addison which conflict with this ordinance shall be, and they are hereby, repealed.

SECTION SIX: This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.


PASSED THIS 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.

AYES: Trustees Hundley, Kucagry, Layne, Lipade & Theodore

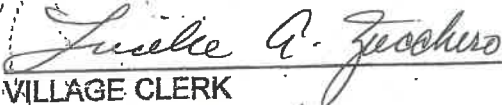
NAYES: None

ABSENT: Trustee Mc Dermott

APPROVED THIS 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.

  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
VILLAGE CLERK

PUBLISHED: 2/17/16

JM527274\1/22/16



# COMMUNITY RESPONSE UNIT

In 2010, the Addison Police Department implemented a division within the Police Department called the Community Response Unit (CRU). CRU consists of a Deputy Chief, a Sergeant, a full-time Officer and a Civilian Assistant. CRU was created to solve problems that arise in the community. They address various issues ranging from gang and narcotic crimes to tenant issues at rental properties. CRU works closely with the Village of Addison's Community Development Department to address quality of life issues within the Village. They monitor these issues to ensure that neglected properties or other nuisances within the Village of Addison are addressed.

The CRU's primary objective is to administer the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program by educating rental property owners on ways to keep drugs and other illegal activity off their property and by forging positive relationships with property owners. This program was instituted by the Village of Addison on May 1, 2009, and it is a requirement for all property owners to attend the Crime Free Multi-Housing Class (Village Ordinance, Chapter 10, Section 10-84). This class consists of police personnel teaching property owners about the Village ordinances, how to screen potential tenants, ways to make their property less susceptible to crime, and educating them on the current gang and drug trends.

The CRU also monitors and follows up with landlords and tenants with regard to the Nuisance Abatement Program. When an offense that is defined as a nuisance activity by Addison Village Ordinance, Chapter 12, Article VI, occurs at a property, the landlord will receive a letter from the Director of Police, notifying him/her that an offense occurred on their property and asking them to abate the nuisance.

If a property owner receives a nuisance abatement letter, the CRU Officer will contact him/her to discuss the issue. This enables a working relationship on a personal level, in which the property owner is not reluctant to call the police for a "small problem."

If three or more nuisance activities occur within a 12-month period at one property, the property owner may be charged under this ordinance.

The CRU also makes periodic checks on vacant properties, addresses lighting issues and abandoned vehicles, and monitors the loitering program.

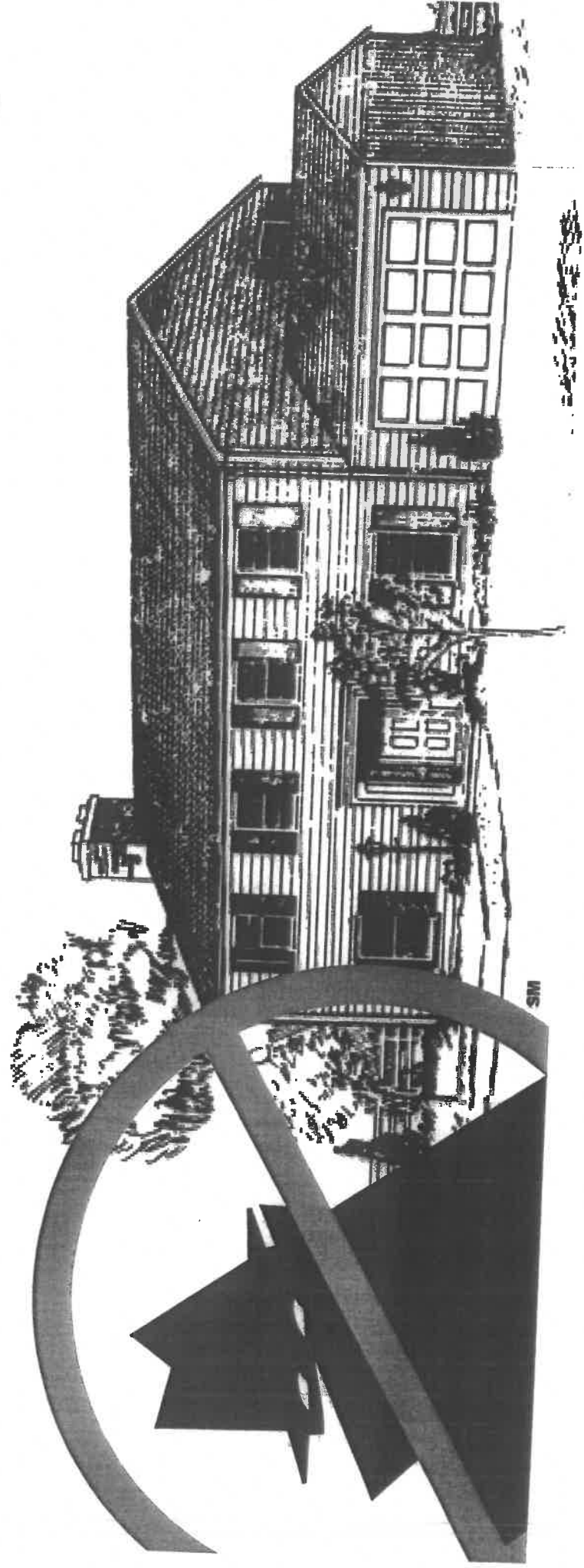
For more information on the CRU, please contact Andrea Lieberenz at (630) 693-7904.





 **National  
Neighborhood  
Watch Program**

# **Preventing Burglaries— How to Protect Your Home**



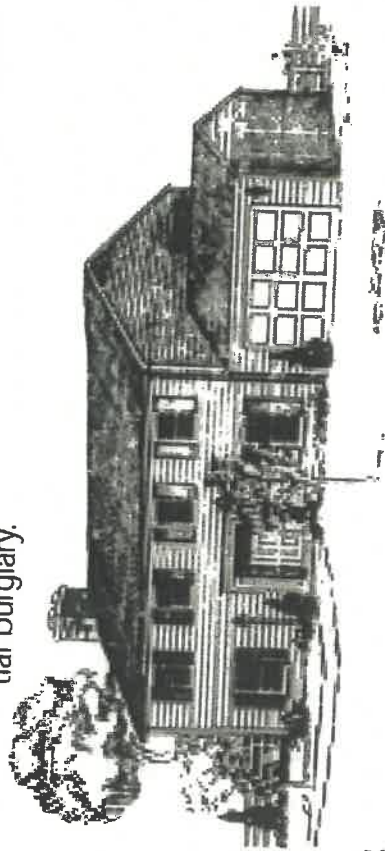


**Crime continues to be a major concern of both citizens and their law enforcement agencies, although the alarming increase in crime in America in recent years appears to be leveling off.**

Since 1990, national trends show burglaries down 32 percent. A large part of the credit for this encouraging news can go to an effective idea which is available to citizens nationwide: the National Neighborhood Watch Program.

The National Neighborhood Watch Program is designed to involve individual citizens in the crime prevention process. It was organized in 1972 by the National Sheriffs' Association in response to the requests of several national law enforcement groups to develop a crime prevention program based on citizen participation.

When citizens take positive steps by learning how to secure their property and report suspicious activities around their homes, they are helping themselves as well as their neighbors. Neighborhood Watch focuses on the prevention of residential burglary.



**Here's why:**

The estimated 2.1 million burglaries committed in the United States in 1999 account for approximately 18 percent of reported serious crime. Two of every three burglaries in 1999 were committed in houses, apartments, or other residential dwellings. The majority of residential burglaries (60 percent) occurred during daylight hours, while non-residential burglaries occurred primarily at night.

Burglary is expensive to the victim. In 1999, while the average loss for both residential and non-residential property burglaries declined from the previous year, victims still experienced an estimated total loss of \$3.1 billion. The average dollar loss per residential burglary was \$1,441.00, and for non-residential burglaries, \$1,490.00.

About 64 percent of all burglaries required forcing a door or window to gain entry. Most houses and apartments are protected by simple and relatively ineffective door and window locks. Modern hardware is available for these locks which will stop the amateur and slow up the experienced burglar. In communities of every size during 1999, the number of burglaries and the financial loss to the victims point to the continued need for vigilance.

Target hardening, or protecting vulnerable areas of your home and property by means of physical security devices, is an excellent starting point for reducing the likelihood that your house or apartment will be burglarized.

## Remember the three D's of burglary prevention:



**Deter** — Sound residential security practices and good locks are a deterrent since they eliminate the opportunity for an easy burglary.



**Detect** — The possibility of detection is increased if you can force a burglar to work where he can be observed. A burglar also wants to avoid drawing attention to himself by making noise, such as breaking glass or smashing doors. Alarms on doors and windows are the surest way to detect a burglar, but watchful neighbors alert to unusual activity who will notify law enforcement authorities are also an effective means of detection.



**Delay** — Delaying a burglar for four minutes is generally considered sufficient to prevent entry into a residential dwelling. A burglar wants to avoid being caught, so the longer it takes to force a door or window, the greater his risk. It is nearly impossible to make a house or apartment impregnable, but it is relatively easy and inexpensive to make forced entry difficult and to delay the burglar.



By keeping in mind the principles of deterrence, detection, and delay, you will be more likely to deny the burglar access to his target.

This booklet is designed to aid you in inspecting your home for security. Take time to put your own house in order. Then talk to your neighbors about how you can help each other keep your entire neighborhood safe.

If you want advice or assistance for your own house or for your neighborhood, your local law enforcement agency is ready to help.

**You** don't have to be one of the two million residential burglary victims and neither do your neighbors. Remember — crime prevention begins at home.

# DOORS

## HINGED DOORS



The most common door type in houses and apartments for use in front entries, porch doors, and doors from garages and basements into the living area of a residence is the hinge door. It is important that all exterior hinge doors be of solid core construction (1 3/4" thick if made of wood) or metal clad. Hollow-core or composition board doors can easily be battered or bored. When checking the security of your doors, the door itself, as well as the hinges, locks, and other hardware, must be considered.

## LOCKS FOR HINGED DOORS

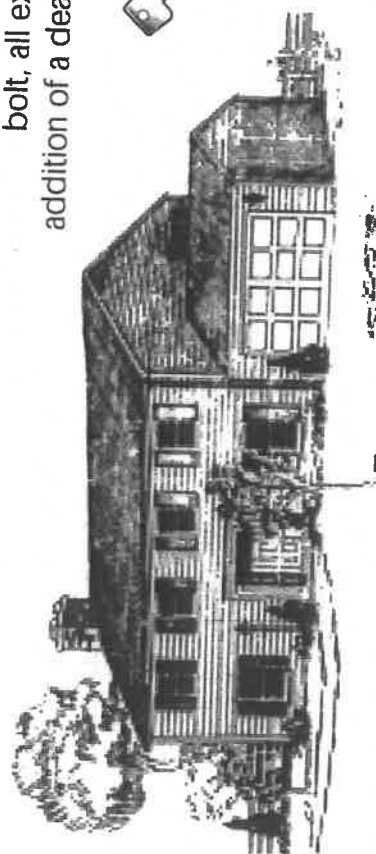
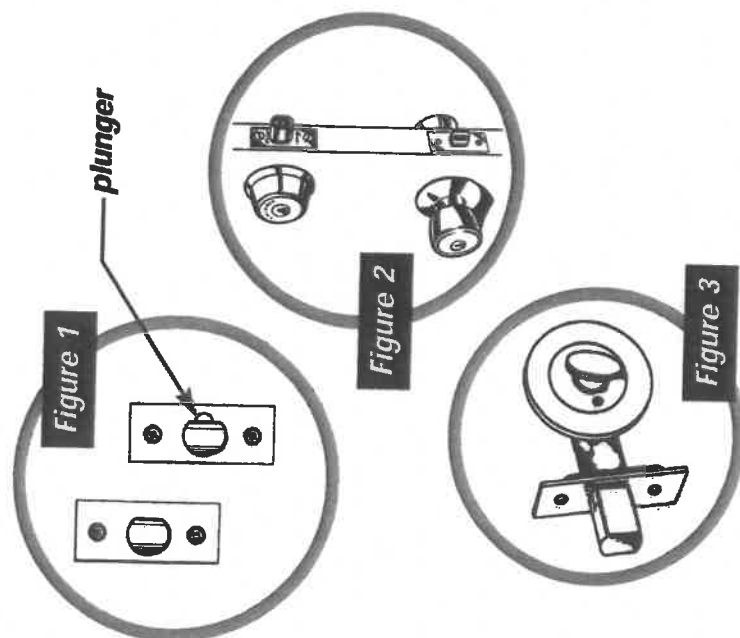
The most frequently used lock for hinge doors is the key-in-the-knob latch lock. For all key-in-the-knob locks, a dead-latching plunger type is recommended. (Figure 1)



Since key-in-the-knob locks can be forced by breaking off the knob, or opened by prying or slipping a piece of plastic between the jamb and the bolt, all exterior door locks of this type should be supplemented by the addition of a deadbolt. (Figure 2)



If there are no glass panels in the door itself or within 40 inches of the locking mechanism, doors can be equipped with a single cylinder deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw. The lock is key-operated from the outside, and is operated from the inside by a thumb turn. (Figure 3)




When installing a deadbolt, attach the strike plate to the door with three-inch screws. The screws should penetrate through the frame to the structure.

If your door has glass panes or if there are windows within 40 inches of the lock, a double cylinder deadlock is recommended. (Figure 4) Double cylinder deadbolt locks are key-operated from both the inside and the outside.

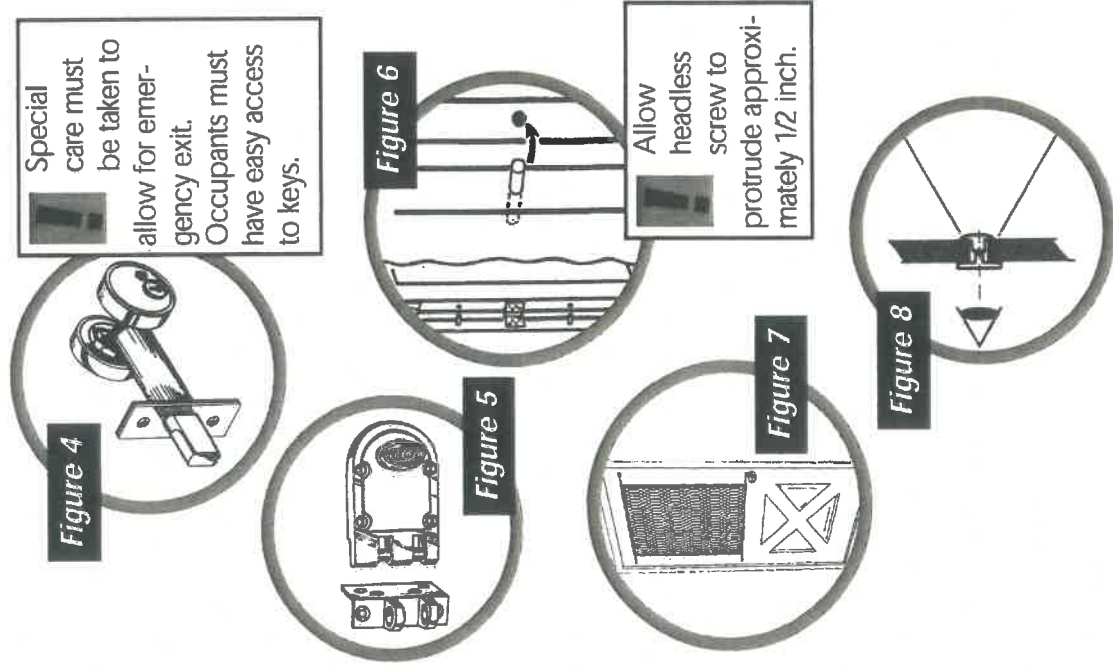
The jimmy-proof deadbolt lock (Figure 5) can be used on any hinge door where the strike can be securely fastened to the door frame. These locks come in both double cylinder and inside thumb-operated models.

### PINNING HINGED DOORS

 If your door hinges are located on the outside of the door, non-removable hinge pins should be used. There is also a simple way to prevent removal of a door if hinge pins have been extracted. Insert headless screws into the back edge of the door midway between the hinges. Drill an opposing hole in the door jamb to receive the screw when the door is closed. (Figure 6)

Doors with glass panels may require special treatment such as security screening or decorative grilles securely mounted using non-removable screws. (Figure 7) Another alternative is to reinforce the glass with clear acrylic plastic or polycarbonate sheeting to prevent it from being shattered. Doors from the garage or the basement into the main living area of the house should be of solid core construction and equipped with secure locks.

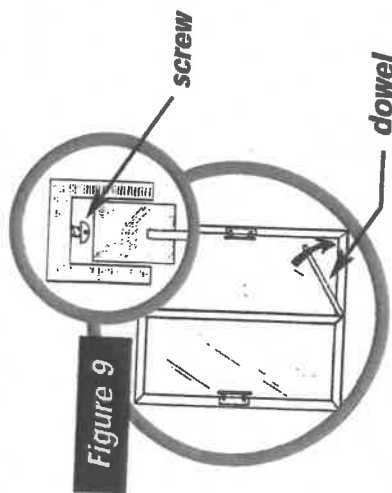
 For solid panel exterior doors, a viewer is recommended. (Figure 8)





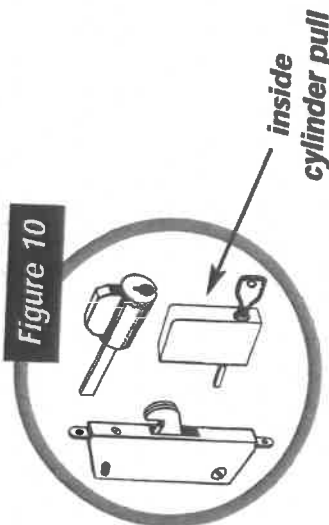
## SLIDING GLASS DOORS

Sliding glass doors present a major security problem if they do not have the proper locks, and if special steps are not taken to prevent removal of the door. An inexpensive security measure involves placing a dowel in the bottom track to prevent the door from being pried open. (Figure 9)

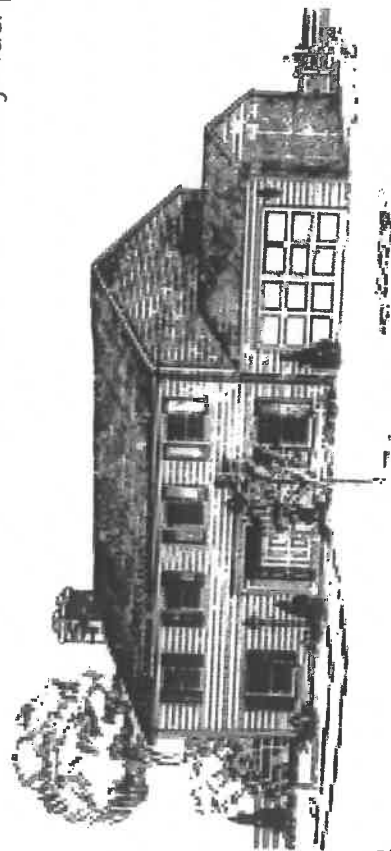


A sliding glass door is lifted into position when installed and, therefore, can be lifted from the track to be removed by a burglar. To prevent this, it is recommended that two or three sheet metal screws be inserted into the track above the sliding door. These screws should be adjusted so that the top of the door barely clears them when it is operated. (Figure 9)

Figure 9



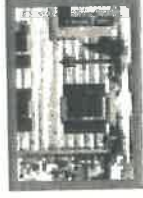
The best lock for a sliding glass door is a deadlock, which utilizes a bore pin tumbler cylinder and is operable by a key from the outside. The lock bolt should engage the strike sufficiently so that it will not be disengaged by any amount of movement. When the existing inside pull has to be changed in order to accommodate a new deadlock, an inside cylinder pull is recommended as a replacement. (Figure 10)



## CRIME PREVENTION BEGINS AT HOME



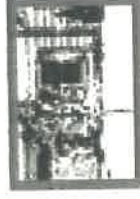
**Front Entrance** — All front entrance doors should be metal clad or of solid core wood construction. A deadbolt lock, in addition to the key-in-the-knob lock, is essential. Use a wide-angle viewer rather than a door chain to observe callers. A screen door or storm door offers additional protection if kept locked.



**Ground Floor Windows** — All ground floor windows should have key-operated sash locks or other locks as described in this booklet. Keep your windows closed and locked when you are away. Screens and storm windows should be securely fastened to the structure.



**Upper Floor Windows** — Keep your second floor secure by trimming tree branches away from the house to prevent access, and do not store ladders where a burglar can use them. Lock all windows while you are away. Take the same precautions as with ground floor windows.

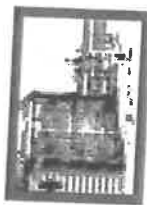


**Basement Windows** — Close and lock your basement windows. If they are not required for ventilation or emergency exit, they should be permanently secured by using nails through the window frame into the structure.

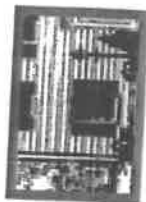


**Garage Door** — The garage door should always be closed and locked. Treat the entrance door from the garage to your house the same as an exterior entrance. A burglar in your garage can work on your house door undetected.

**Porch and Patio Doors** — Treat all exterior doors on the rear and sides of your home as possible targets for entry. Since they may be less observable from the street and by neighbors than a front entrance, extra precautions may need to be taken.



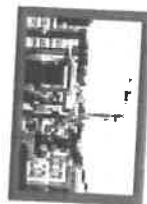
**Yard Lights** — Each exterior entrance, including the garage door, should be well lighted. Post lights in your yard or floodlights mounted under the eaves to prevent blind spots where burglars can hide. Low cost controls for exterior lights will turn them on and off at specified times, or motion-sensor lighting can be installed.



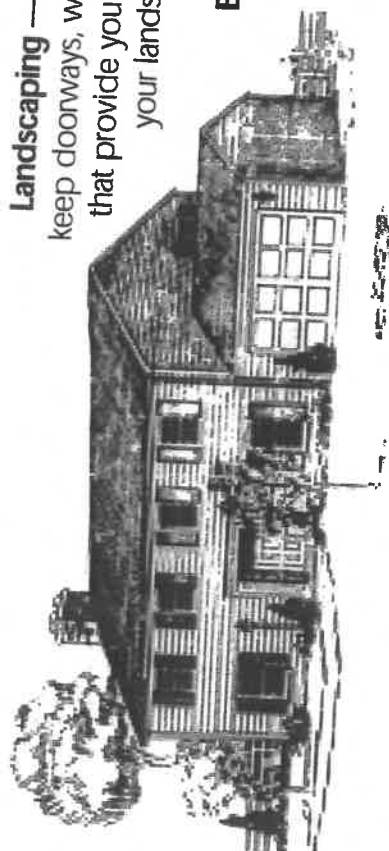
**Interior Lights** — When you are away from home, whether on vacation or just for the evening, keep some interior lights burning. To create the appearance that someone is at home, use a timer to turn lights on and off at normal times. A radio playing adds to the illusion that the house is occupied.



**Landscaping** — When placing trees, bushes, and flowers, remember to keep doorways, windows, and porches clear. Remember that the bushes that provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Plan your landscaping with both privacy and security in mind.



**Be Neighborly** — Share with your neighbors your concern about burglary. Tell them what you are doing to protect your home. Ask them to report any suspicious persons or activities around your home to your law enforcement agency. Good neighbors make safe neighborhoods.



## WINDOWS

### DOUBLE HUNG SASH WINDOWS

Double hung sash windows, which operate upward and downward, usually have simple crescent latches which can easily be jimmied. The most effective protection for double hung windows is a key-locking security sash lock. (Figure 11) These should be mounted with two-inch or three-inch screws. Storm windows and screens offer some additional protection.

For extremely vulnerable windows, heavy-gauge metal ornamental grilles may be used. (Figure 12) Grilles should be attached with non-removable screws or fastened from the inside.

Pinning double hung sash windows provides an inexpensive and effective solution. Pinning can be accomplished by drilling holes at a downward angle in each top corner of the inside sash, and entering the outside sash. The window can then be secured by inserting nails through the holes which prevent it from being raised. (Figure 13)

### SLIDING, CASEMENT, AND JALOUSIE WINDOWS

Protect all of your windows. Remember that second floor and basement windows are as important as first floor windows. Screens and storm windows are always an asset if properly secured.



Sliding windows, either metal or wood frame, should be protected in the same way as sliding doors. Wooden dowels laid in the track and screws set in the track to prevent the window from being lifted out are effective protective measures.

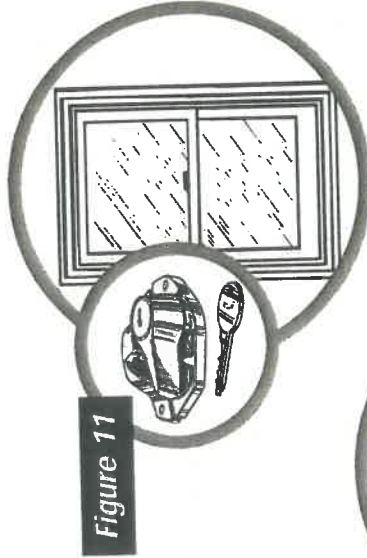


Figure 11

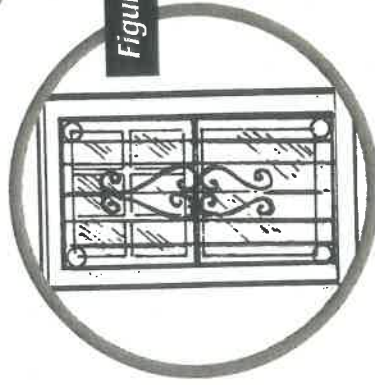


Figure 12

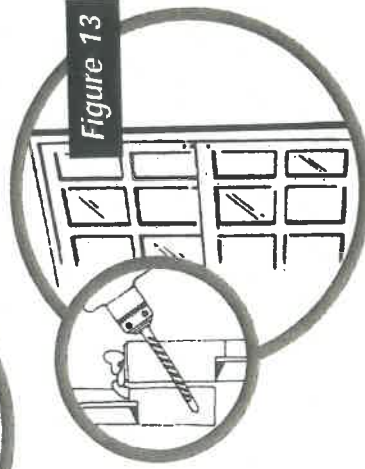
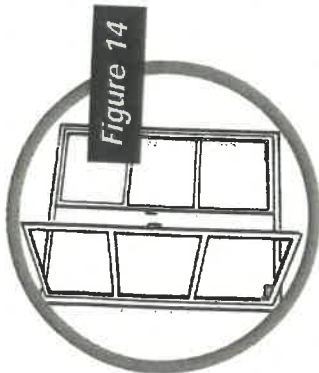


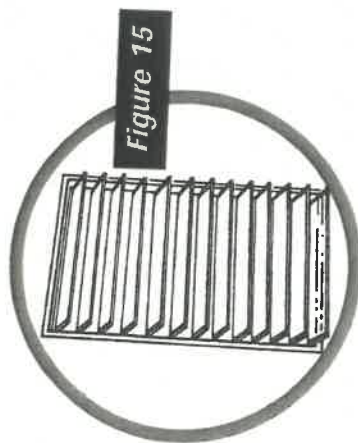
Figure 13



Casement windows generally open and close by means of a gear operating handle and have a locking device which secures the window to the center post. (Figure 14) Some protection is offered by removing the crank handle from the opening mechanism when away from home. Do not leave casement windows partially opened as they can then be easily forced.



Jalousie (louvered) windows are a high security risk because individual slats are easily removed to allow access. (Figure 15) Jalousie windows should be replaced if possible, or a protective grille or screen should be added.



## YARDS

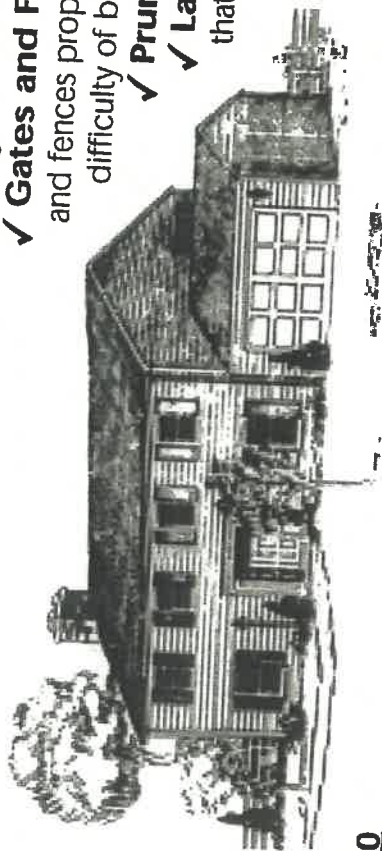
✓ **Garages** — Garage doors are a possible means of entry to your house, as well as offering a burglar the opportunity to steal automobiles, tools, bicycles, and other property stored in the garage. Keep your garage door closed and locked.

✓ **Walks and Driveways** — Walks and driveways should be kept free from offering concealment to intruders.

✓ **Gates and Fences** — While offering possible concealment to burglars, gates and fences properly used can also deter the removal of large items and increase the difficulty of breaking in.

✓ **Prune Large Trees** — Low limbs can provide second story access.  
✓ **Lawn Care** — A well-manicured lawn provides an effective clue that someone is at home and cares.

✓ **Trim Shrubs** — Deny burglars a hiding place to work — don't block the view. Permit ready visibility by neighbors and police.





✓ **Alarms** — Residential burglar alarms are available from electrical and hardware dealers, as well as entire systems that may be leased or purchased from alarm companies. Most residential alarms emit a loud noise from a bell, siren, or tone generator. An audible alarm on doors and windows can be an effective deterrent to the amateur burglar. If you do install an audible alarm, make sure that your family and your neighbors are informed about its function and that they are trained to call your law enforcement agency when they hear the alarm. Your law enforcement agency should be consulted when you install an alarm.

## LIGHTS

Exterior lighting is extremely important in residential security. Each exterior doorway should be lighted to prevent a burglar from concealing his activities. Yards and areas around windows should be lighted to prevent concealment. A number of ornamental porch lights and lamp post lights are available which can help eliminate night blind spots. (Figure 16)

Yard lights and entrance lights can be equipped with sensors which will turn the light on at dusk and off at dawn. Motion sensor lighting can also be installed that will activate when a person walks past or some other movement takes place. (Figure 17)



To give the appearance that you are at home, use an electric timer to turn lamps on in the evening and off at your normal retirement hour. (Figure 18) Timers can be used to turn on radios as well as lamps. Use at least one timer on each floor of the house.

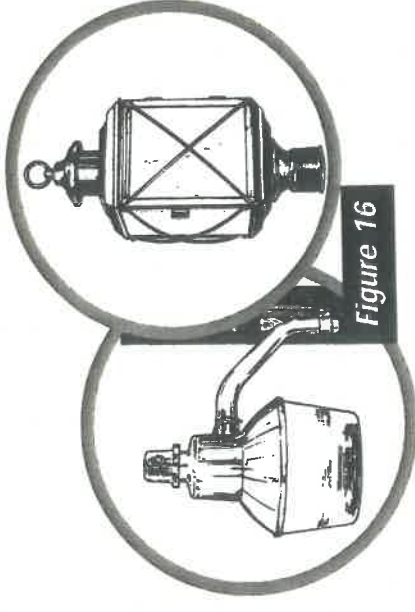


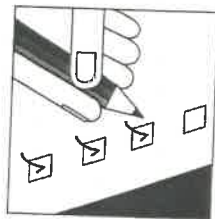
Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



## HOME SECURITY INSPECTION CHECKLIST



The following checklist was designed to help you make a security survey of your own home.

The first purpose of a home security inspection is to identify features in your home or the daily routines of your family which might make your home an easy target for a burglar.

The security inspection should begin at your front door, and include an inspection of all your doors and windows, locks, lights, and landscaping. Each question for which you answered with a checkmark in the orange shaded column indicates a security weakness or hazard which requires your attention.

If you would like professional advice and assistance in conducting a thorough home security inspection, call your local law enforcement agency.

### Doors

1. Are all outside doors in the house of metal or solid wood construction?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Are door frames strong enough and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Are door hinges protected from removal from the outside?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are there windows in any door or within 40 inches of the locks?  
☐ No ☐ Yes
5. Are all door locks adequate and in good repair?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are strikes and strike plates adequate and properly installed?  
☐ Yes ☐ No





7. Can the locking mechanism be reached through a mail slot, delivery port, or pet entrance in the doorway?

☐ No

☐ Yes

8. Is there a screen or storm door with an adequate lock?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Are all entrances lighted with at least a 40 watt light-bulb?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Can the front entrance be observed from the street or public areas?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. Does the porch or landscaping offer concealment from view from the street or public areas?

☐ No

☐ Yes

12. If there is a sliding glass door, is the sliding panel secured from being lifted out of the track?

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Is a "charley-bar," dowel, or key-operated auxiliary lock used on sliding glass doors?

☐ Yes

☐ No

### Entrances From Garage and Basement

14. Are all entrances to living quarters from the garage and basement of metal or solid wood construction?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. Does the door from the garage to the living quarters have locks adequate for an exterior entrance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Does the door from the basement to the living quarters have an adequate lock operated from the living quarters side?

☐ Yes

☐ No

### Windows

17. Do all windows have adequate locks in operating condition?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. Do windows have screens or storm windows that lock from the inside?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19. Do any windows open onto areas that may be hazardous or are prone to entry by burglars?

☐ No

☐ Yes

20. Do windows that open to hazardous areas have security screens or grills?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. Are exterior areas of windows free from concealing structures or landscaping?

☐ Yes

☐ No

22. Is the exterior adequately lighted at all window areas?

☐ Yes

☐ No

23. Are trees and shrubbery kept trimmed back from upper floor windows?

☐ Yes

☐ No

24. Are ladders kept outside the house where they are accessible?

☐ No

☐ Yes

### Basement Doors and Windows

25. Is there a door from outside to the basement?

☐ No

☐ Yes

26. If so, is that door adequately secure for an exterior door?

☐ Yes

☐ No

27. Is the outside basement entrance lighted by an exterior light of at least 40 watts?

☐ Yes

☐ No

28. Is the outside basement door concealed from the street or neighbors?

☐ No

☐ Yes

29. Are all basement windows adequately secured against entrance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

### Garage Doors and Windows

30. Is the garage door equipped with an adequate locking device?

☐ Yes

☐ No

31. Is the garage door kept closed and locked at all times?

☐ Yes

☐ No

32. Are the garage windows secured adequately for ground floor windows?

☐ Yes

☐ No

33. Is the outside utility entrance to the garage as secure as required for any ground floor entrance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

34. Are tools and ladders kept inside the garage?

☐ Yes

☐ No

35. Are all entrances to the garage lighted on the outside by at least a 40 watt light-bulb?

☐ Yes

☐ No



**The National Sheriffs' Association**  
**In Cooperation With Your Local Law Enforcement Agency**



**For additional materials contact:**  
**The National Sheriffs' Association**  
**1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3490**  
**(703) 836-7827 • Fax (703) 519-8567**



# **PART ONE**

## **WHAT IS THE CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM?**

### **WHERE IT BEGAN**

The CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM began in Mesa, Arizona in July 1992. It has spread across the United States and to Canada in a very short time. It was designed to be law enforcement driven.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

The CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM is a unique, three-phase certification program for rental properties of all sizes, including single family rental homes. The first phase is the completion of an eight-hour program, taught by attorneys, police and fire personnel. Frequently, guest speakers will also attend to address specific topics relating to rental properties. This police-sponsored program is designed to be very easy, yet extremely effective, at reducing criminal activity in rental properties.

The CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM addresses these topics:

- ☐ Understanding Crime Prevention
- ☐ C.P.T.E.D. Concepts
- ☐ The Application Process
- ☐ Common Sense Self Defense
- ☐ Community Rules/Leases
- ☐ Apartment Communities/Not Complexes
- ☐ Active Property Management
- ☐ Combating Crime Problems
- ☐ Police: To Serve and Protect?
- ☐ Partnership with the Fire Department
- ☐ Dealing with Non-Compliance

Typically, the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM is taught during a single eight-hour day. Some police agencies will sponsor two four-hour training sessions. The program is designed to be flexible, as many communities have differing needs.





## **WHO SHOULD ATTEND**

Property owners, managers, leasing staff, maintenance personnel and others in the management team should attend the entire 8-hour training program. It is also recommended that police officers attend the training to understand the civil nature of rental communities and to establish a rapport with managers of rental properties.

## **PHASE ONE: TRAINING**

After completion of the eight-hour training program, each participant will receive a certificate which has been signed by the chief law enforcement official of that community. The certificate is also signed by the program coordinator of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM, who sponsors the training.

**This green certificate is to be immediately framed and displayed in the leasing office or in a prominent place where applicants are sure to see it. Prospective residents should be told as soon as possible that the property management is working with the police to keep the community healthy. If there is no leasing office, a certificate can be displayed in a 3-ring notebook with other materials used in the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM. The manager or owner should show the notebook to prospective residents.**

**Participating managers should also begin immediate implementation of the Crime Free Lease Addendum, which is the backbone of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM. This addendum to the lease cites specific actions that will be taken by management if a resident, or somebody under the resident's control, is involved in illegal or dangerous activity on or near the rental property.**

**If the management is conducting a background check that includes credit and criminal information, the applicant should be informed before they turn in the application or pay any fees or deposits. Every prospective resident must be treated exactly the same as the others. It is important to develop office policies to ensure this.**

## **PHASE TWO: C.P.T.E.D. INSPECTION**

In the second phase of the program, a representative of the police department will inspect the rental property to assess physical security and general appearance of the property. If the property meets the agency's requirements, they will be given a second certificate signed by the chief law enforcement official.

This red certificate will certify the property has met the minimum security requirements of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM. The minimum security requirements are:

## MANDATORY C.P.T.E.D. SECURITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Dead Bolts
2. Security Strike Plate Screws
3. View Finders - Entry Doors
4. Anti-SLIDE / Lock - Sliding glass doors
5. Adequate Lighting
6. Proper Landscaping

## PHASE THREE: SAFETY SOCIAL

In the third and final phase of the program, the sponsoring law enforcement agency will conduct a Safety Social for residents at the rental property. This will include information about general safety principles and crime prevention, including Neighborhood Watch information. This will also give law enforcement the opportunity to explain the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM to the residents of the rental community.

**Management is responsible for providing food, non-alcoholic drinks and entertainment** for this event. It is also recommended that property managers raffle door prizes as an added incentive to draw residents to the meeting. **It is necessary to conduct at least one (1) meeting per year to maintain membership** in the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM.

A blue certificate will be issued at the Safety Social to demonstrate to the residents that management is committed and has completed all three (3) phases of the program.

## FULL CERTIFICATION

Once fully certified, the property manager will receive a gold certificate. (This certificate is the only certificate that has an expiration date. It is renewed each year after the subsequent Safety Social has been conducted.)

After completion of the first safety social, the management can post the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM signs on the property. It is recommended that one sign be posted at each entrance to the property where prospective residents will see them.

## SIGN REGISTRATION

There is a one-time registration fee of about \$25.00 for each sign (to cover costs). **The sign is the property of the Addison Police Department**, and permission to display the sign can be revoked if the property is sold or the management no longer wishes to participate in the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM.





An added incentive to reach full certification is the use of the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** logo in all appropriate advertisements, as well as on company letterheads, business cards and associated paperwork.

This logo has achieved a very high level of recognition in the United States and Canada. It has proven very effective in attracting honest residents looking for safe housing. It has worked equally well to discourage those looking for an apartment unit for conducting criminal activities.

## **PHONE-IN REQUESTS**

An additional advantage to being fully certified is that people can call in for a list of fully certified properties.

## **MAINTAINING CRIME FREE SIGNS**

It is the responsibility of the management to maintain and replace all lost or damaged signs. Contact the Crime Free Program Coordinator if this occurs. It is a good idea to use a car wax on signs to prevent them from fading or cracking.

Carefully consider how each sign is installed to prevent easy removal. Through bolts can be bent or stripped to prevent removal. Signs can be attached with liquid nails and/or bolted to a building at a height that cannot be reached.



## PART TWO

### CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

#### C.P.T.E.D. ELEMENTS

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D.) is comprised of four (4) key elements: **Surveillance**, **Access Control**, **Territoriality**, and **Activity Support**. Virtually any property crime can be eliminated by using C.P.T.E.D.

#### IMPROVE SURVEILLANCE

**SURVEILLANCE** is the first element of C.P.T.E.D. **Surveillance** is the ability to look into an area and the ability to look back out. It can be formal or informal. **Formal surveillance** is generally organized, while **informal surveillance** is naturally occurring. **NOTE: You should observe your property from all locations, keeping in mind whether you can see into and out of the property. Keep in mind that residents and staff are formal surveillance partners and that neighbors or visitors to your property will conduct informal surveillance of your property. Remove anything that hinders surveillance.** There are three types of surveillance to consider. *Natural, Mechanical and Organized.* The best plan will involve some combination of all three types of surveillance.

**Natural Surveillance** is naturally occurring. As people are moving around an area, they will be able to observe what is going on around them, provided the area is open and well-lighted. Natural Surveillance is typically free of cost, but observers may choose not to get involved in any situation that may pose a potential threat to themselves or others.

When considering surveillance of your property, remember that casual observers from neighboring properties might be willing to report suspicious activity. All you need to do is ask! It is a great idea to ask them to join with your Neighborhood Watch meeting and safety socials.

**Mechanical Surveillance** employs the use of cameras, mirrors and other equipment that allows an individual to monitor a remote area. Mechanical

SURVEILLANCE	NATURAL	ORGANIZED
	RESIDENTS	RESIDENT PATROLS
	MANAGEMENT	BLOCK WATCH
	MAINTENANCE	SECURITY PATROLS
	GROUNDSKEEPERS	POLICE PATROLS
	NEIGHBORS	OFF-DUTY OFFICERS
	MECHANICAL	
	CAMERAS	
	MIRRORS	
	C.C.T.V.	





Surveillance usually involves the purchase of moderately inexpensive mirrors to the more expensive electronic devices, such as closed circuit television (CCTV).

**NOTE:** Once the equipment is purchased, maintenance of the devices must be considered.

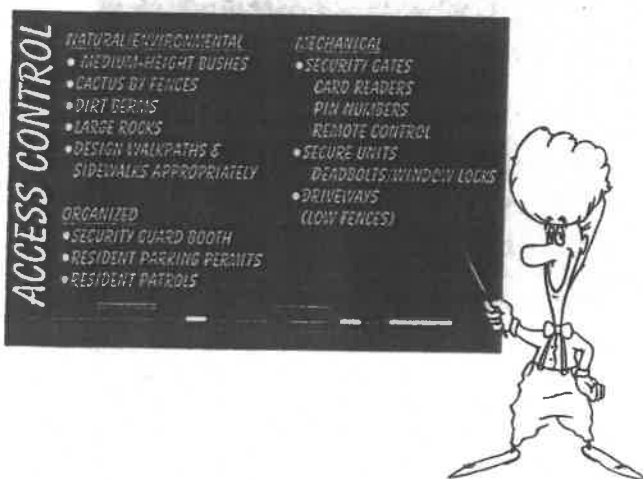
**Organized Surveillance** includes security patrols and other people who are organized to watch a targeted area. While this is the most effective deterrent to crime, it is also the least cost effective. While it may be necessary to employ security patrols or off-duty police officers, once the patrols are discontinued there is generally nothing left to show for your investment.

## IMPROVE ACCESS CONTROL

**ACCESS CONTROL** is the second element in C.P.T.E.D. Because many criminals look for an easy escape, **limiting access into an area and back out again is a great way to deter criminal activity.** Access Control can be demonstrated by having one way into and out of a location, such as a security post or the use of mechanical gates. Others who use alternative methods to enter an area look suspicious, risk detection and sense an increased risk of apprehension.

It is important to assess how the intended users are entering the property. It is equally important to assess how the non-intended users are entering the property as well. Look at perimeter fencing for damage. Look for footprints in the dirt and gravel. Check for wear patterns in grassy areas. Determining the weak points will be the first step to correcting the problem.

There are three (3) types of Access Controls to consider: *Natural (or Environmental)*, *Mechanical* and *Organized*.



**Natural/Environmental Access Control** involves the use of the environment. To keep trespassers from climbing over walls for instance, you could plant a hearty cactus in the area where it will be highly visible. The use of dirt berms or large rocks can also keep unwanted visitors from entering onto private property and vacant lots.

**Mechanical Access Control** includes the use of security gates, which have proven very effective at reducing auto thefts, burglaries and drive-by shootings.

Most perpetrators of these crimes do not want to exit the way they entered, as it gives witnesses the opportunity to record license plates and get better suspect information.



**Organized Access Control** entails the use of security or courtesy patrol to monitor those entering the property. Distribution of parking permits, affixed to registered vehicles, will identify which vehicles belong to the residents. **Vehicles should not be allowed to back into parking spaces, so that parking permits will be visible at all times.**

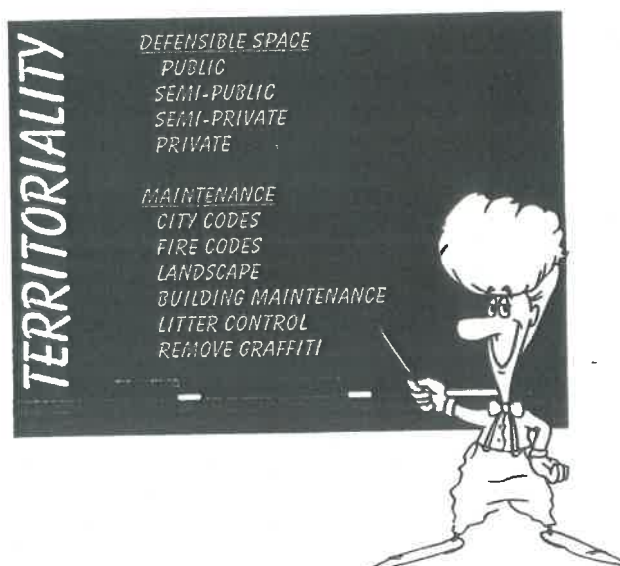
## IMPROVE TERRITORIALITY

**TERRITORIALITY** is the third element in C.P.T.E.D. Territoriality is a psychological impression that people get when they look at the property. If management displays good territoriality, it will influence the community to respect the property as well. Good territoriality demonstrates a sense of ownership, alerting potential offenders that they don't belong there and they will be seen and reported because undesirable behavior will not be tolerated. It has two (2) principle components: **Defensible Space and Maintenance.**

**Defensible Space** is divided into four (4) categories: Public, Semi-public, Semi-private, and Private.

1. **Public** areas are typically the least defensible. A car driving on a public street would not automatically arouse suspicion.
2. **Semi-public** areas might include a cul-de-sac. If there are only five homes in the circle, a driver would be expected to stop at one of the five homes or leave the area.
3. **Semi-private** areas might include sidewalks or common areas around residential areas. While most people may not confront a stranger in a common area, they are likely to call the police if the person does not appear to belong there.
4. **Private** areas are different in rental communities than in single-family home neighborhoods. In a typical apartment, the private area may not begin until you actually enter into the unit. This is especially true if several units share a common balcony or stairways. In a single-family home neighborhood, many owners consider their front yard to be private, or defensible space.

There are many ways to establish defensible space. By planting low growing hedges or bushes, you will show a defined property line. By posting signs such as "No Trespassing" or "No Soliciting," you have established the area as defensible space.



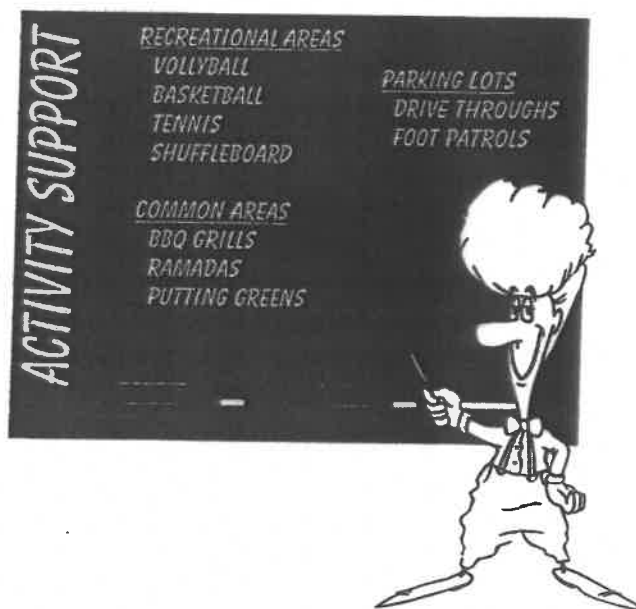
**Maintenance** is another key issue for Territoriality. Properties that are clean and well maintained are more likely to attract residents who take pride in their community. This also promotes confidence in the management team.

If you and a resident agree to improvements or repairs on the rental unit, make sure the details are in writing and signed by both parties. All improvements to the property must be approved ahead of time, by the landlord, especially if the tenant expects to be reimbursed for materials and/or labor. Keep receipts and records of the time and money spent.

## IMPROVE ACTIVITY SUPPORT

**ACTIVITY SUPPORT** is the fourth element in C.P.T.E.D. This involves the appropriate use of recreational facilities and common areas. The objective is to **fill the area with legitimate users so the abusers will leave.**

It may be difficult to believe that filling an area with legitimate users will cause the deviant users, or abusers, to leave. But the opposite is also true. If you fill an area with deviant users, the legitimate users will withdraw.



To promote Activity Support, utilize common areas effectively. By incorporating ramadas, picnic areas and other amenities into open areas, the legitimate users will maintain ownership of the property.

In recreational areas, utilize proper lighting techniques and establish community rules to encourage the proper and safe use of the facilities. For laundry facilities, exercise and game rooms, maintain unobscured visibility for the intended users.



Recommendation (Pass Phase II or Reschedule) \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reschedule Date \_\_\_\_\_ Result of Reschedule (Pass/Fail) \_\_\_\_\_



**Addison Police Department**  
*Community Response Unit*  
**Residential Rental Property**  
**Phase II CPTED Assessment**



**Property Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessed By:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- *The purpose of this survey is to provide security recommendations. This report is only advisory and is not intended to identify all security weaknesses or to warrant the adequacy of all present and future security measures whether or not recommended.*
- *The CPTED Phase II Inspection is not related to any Community Development Inspection and there are no punitive damages for non-compliance.*
- *Completion of these recommendations qualifies the property for the Crime Free Multi-Housing Phase II Certification.*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Eyeview with 180° view (or a clear, non-obstructed view of main entrance via window) \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

2. Smoke Detector \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

3. Dead bolt locks on all unit entry doors \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

4. Strike plate with 2 ¾" - 3" screws \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

5. Anti-lift/slide devices on sliding doors/windows (maximum 1/4" play) \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

6. Factory locks on windows (maximum 1/4" play) \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

7. Proper trimming of trees and shrubs (away from building and lights, eliminating hiding places) \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

8. Adequate security light (city code)  
(Parking lot lights for apartment buildings) \_\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

9. Utilizes Crime Free Lease Addendum

\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\* OPTIONAL \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant Screening/Criminal Background Checks

\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

Photo ID Required: \_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

Rental File: \_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

All Resident Names Listed on Lease/File

\_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_ N

**Additional Comments and/or Recommendations:**

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Re-inspection Date (If Needed):

\_\_\_\_\_

Phase III – Neighborhood Watch Meeting Date:

\_\_\_\_\_







**CONGRATULATIONS** to the owners of the following properties for becoming fully-certified in all three phases of the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM**. The owners of these properties were recognized in front of the Village Board for their dedication to the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program and their commitment to working to keep criminal activity off of their rental properties. The owners are now able to use the Crime Free logo in their advertisements:

- 14 N. Church Street
- College Park Apartments:  
902-948 College Boulevard
- 709 Georgian Court
- Chablis Apartments:  
610, 620, 622 & 630 N. Lincoln
- 5 S. Lincoln Avenue
- 484 E. Lorraine Avenue
- 505 N. Macie Court
- 35 Michael Lane
- 163 Michael Lane
- 550-580 N. Mill Road
- 495 W. Park Avenue
- Northgate Apartments:  
900 N. Rohlwing Road



## PART THREE

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

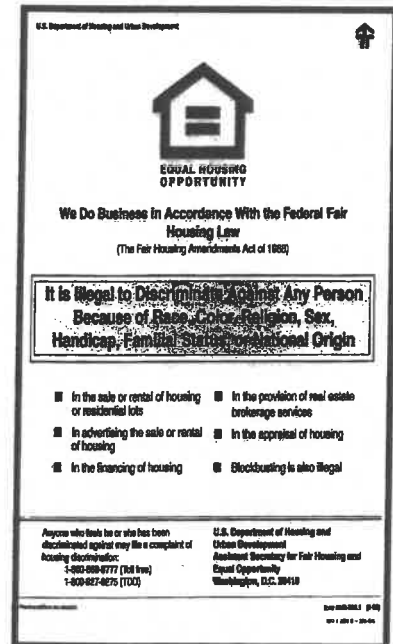
#### IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT

Property managers have differing views on how, or if, they should screen prospective residents. Some property managers have rigid guidelines established by their management company or owners. Other property managers may feel that calling references or checking prospective residents is not worth the effort. It is important to understand the application process and Fair Housing Laws.

#### WHAT ARE PROTECTED CLASSES?

Federal Fair Housing Laws strictly prohibit any discrimination against protected classes. Those protected classes may include these and others:

- ☐ race
- ☐ color
- ☐ religion
- ☐ gender
- ☐ handicap
- ☐ familial status
- ☐ national origin
- ☐ source of income
- ☐ sexual preference



What most people may not be aware of is that **EVERYONE** is in a protected class! Everyone has a race, a color, a sex and a national origin. No one can discriminate against an applicant based on their color, regardless of what color they are. No one can be denied residency based on their national origin, regardless of where they were born.

**NOTE:** You should keep an Equal Opportunity Housing sign in the office to remind prospective residents that you do not discriminate against the Fair Housing Laws.

## WHAT ABOUT NON-PROTECTED CLASSES?

While discrimination against non-protected classes is not necessarily illegal, it may not be profitable either. For example, a property manager may discriminate against pet owners (provided that the applicant is not dependent upon the animal for a particular disability), but not allowing pets may turn away a large number of applicants. Another example is the property manager who chooses to rent to only non-smokers. Here again, it may be legal, but it may not be profitable.



## WHAT ABOUT CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR?

At this time, it is not illegal to deny residency to an applicant based on their criminal history. Keep in mind you should not discriminate on the basis of an arrest, but only on a conviction. If an applicant says they were not convicted, but they made a plea bargain instead, it is **still** a conviction.

Behavior is not one of the federally protected classes. An applicant can be denied residency for behaviors at previous rental properties. For example, you could refuse residency to an applicant who has repeatedly disturbed or threatened previous neighbors, sold or manufactured drugs, or damaged properties they previously rented.

**YOUR APPLICATION  
SHOULD ASK ABOUT  
THESE ITEMS...**

APPLICATION (CONTINUED)

- HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
IF SO, PLEASE EXPLAIN: \_\_\_\_\_
- ARE YOU CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN ANY  
ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN: \_\_\_\_\_
- DO YOU CURRENTLY USE OR SELL ANY  
ILLEGAL DRUGS? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

When looking at criminal history of prospective residents, ask yourself, "Is this a crime that poses a threat to my residents?" A felony embezzlement charge may not be a threat, but a misdemeanor charge for assault may constitute a threat.

### Notes:

## **MAKE CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING A COMMITMENT!**

It is important to convey to all perspective residents your intentions to participate in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. Some property managers will attach a copy of the Crime Free Addendum to each application, while other property managers will display a poster-sized copy of the addendum in an area where prospective residents fill out their application.

Be certain to treat all applicants equally and fairly. Also be certain to tell them about your participation in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program before they fill out the application. This gives them the opportunity to continue looking for other options.

**NOTE:** If an applicant refuses to live in a Crime Free community, you won't have to deny their application!

### **DISCLOSURE**

If an applicant discloses previous criminal history of convictions on the application, you should decide whether or not to accept the application immediately. If you accept the application, you may lose the right to deny the application later for any information they have disclosed.

Check with your management company and/or attorney to be certain of your company's policy in this regard.

**Bottom line...Check each application thoroughly before accepting it or any processing fees.**

**Notes:**

## CREDIT REPORTING AGENCIES

Many credit reporting agencies will offer to search local or county court records for criminal data pertaining to your prospective tenants. While many of these companies make claims, the results they get may vary as greatly as the costs.

It is important to *shop around* for the best results, using a control group of names currently being processed. In most cases, you will see the best results from companies that use licensed private investigators and search multiple courts and jurisdictions.

### Notes:

## MATERIAL FALSIFICATION

If there is a material falsification of the information provided on the rental application, the manager may serve a 10-day notice to the resident to terminate the rental agreement if the information is not corrected. If the corrected information provided would have disqualified the applicant in the beginning, the manager may proceed with the 10-day written notice.

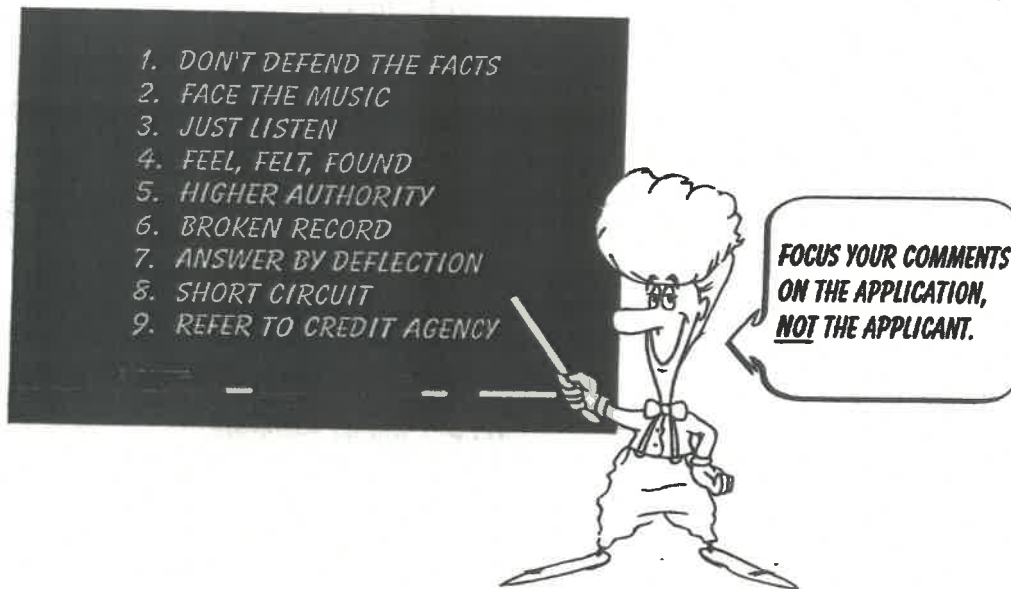
If the mistake was unintentional and the resident would have qualified anyway, the manager should void the 10-day notice.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, MATERIAL FALSIFICATION MEANS UNTRUE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION THAT "MATTERS," OR IS PERTINENT TO THE ISSUE OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS.



## REFUSING AN APPLICATION

Try to resolve the applicant's questions by using as few of these techniques as possible.



1. Don't Defend The Facts
2. Face The Music
3. Just Listen
4. Feel, Felt, Found
5. Higher Authority
6. Dumb Broken Record
7. Answer By Deflection
8. Short Circuit
9. Refer Applicant To Credit Agency

**BOTTOM LINE:**  
**PLAN YOUR WORDS VERY CAREFULLY –**  
**DISCRIMINATION SUITS ARE FILED WHEN MANAGERS SAY TOO MUCH!**

*Note: This is derived from an article that appeared in Property Management Magazine October 1992*



## **National Apartment Association**

### **NSC Suppliers Guide / Resident and Employee Screening**

#### **Allied/ResidentCheck**

Jorge Baldor, President  
4230 LBJ, Suite 407  
Dallas, TX 75244  
972/404-0808 ext.114;  
Fax: 972/692-7977  
jbaldor@residentcheck.com  
www.residentcheck.com

#### **CBCAmRent an affiliate of CBCInnovis**

Linda Richer, Director of Resident Screening  
Christian Hoegh-Guldberg, National Sales Representative  
P.O. Box 605  
Columbus, OH 43216  
614/222-5355; Fax: 614/222-4111  
www.cbcinnovis.com

#### **Fidelity Information Corporation**

Scott LaMay, Business Development  
17383 Sunset Blvd., Suite A-370  
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272  
800/845-1086; Fax: 310/230-0021  
scott@gofic.com  
www.goFIC.com

#### **On-Site.com**

Joseph Marcino, Vice President, Sales  
Jake Harrington, Business Development Manager  
105 Fremont Avenue, Suite D  
Los Altos, CA 94022  
866/2ON-SITE; Fax: 877/FAX ON-SITE  
sales@on-site.com  
www.on-site.com

#### **RealPage, Inc.**

Andrea Massey, V.P., Marketing  
4000 International Pkwy.  
Carrollton, TX 75007-1913  
1-87-REALPAGE; Fax: 972/820-3383  
marketing@realpage.com  
www.realpage.com

#### **RentGrow, Inc.**

Anne Schwegman, Director, Products, Services  
Michael J. Lapsley, President  
275 Wyman St., Suite 14  
Waltham, MA 02451  
800/736-8476; Fax: 781/290-0687  
sales@rentgrow.com  
www.rentgrow.com

#### **Talx Corporation - The Work Number® Service**

Resident and Employee Screening  
Frank Casso, Sales Manager  
1850 Borman Ct.  
St. Louis, MO 63146  
314/214-7248; Fax: 314/214-7588  
fcasso@talx.com / www.theworknumber.com

#### **American Computer Software**

Ken Saunders, Director of Product Marketing  
Denis Clark, VP Sales and Marketing  
4660 Duke Dr., Ste 210  
Cincinnati, OH 45040  
513/492-5844; 800/236-1596;  
Fax: 513/792-5821  
marketing@domin-8.com  
www.domin-8.com

#### **Contemporary Information Corporation**

William Bower, President  
25044 Peachland Avenue #209  
Santa Clarita, CA 91321  
800/288-4757; Fax: 800/677-8494  
wbower@continfo.com  
www.continfo.com

#### **First Advantage SafeRent**

Monte Jones, Vice President, Sales  
Nevel DeHart, Executive Vice President  
7300 Westmore Road, Suite 3  
Rockville, MD 20852-5223  
800/999-0350; Fax: 301/ 881-6703  
mjones@FADVSafeRent.com  
www.FADVSafeRent.com

#### **Premier Information Center**

Randy Veres, Account Executive  
Marla Fogle, Account Executive  
301 E. Virginia, 2nd Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
602/744-3703; Fax: 602/744-3768  
kkoga@merchantsinfo.com  
dwhipple@merchantsinfo.com  
www.merchantsinfo.com

#### **Reliable Background Screening**

Rudy Troisi, President  
P.O. Box 22215  
Phoenix, AZ 85028  
800/787-2439; 602/870-7711;  
Fax: 602/870-7524  
sales@reliablescreening.com  
www.reliablescreening.com

#### **Resident Data, A ChoicePoint Service**

Resident and Employee Screening  
Mike Davis, Director of Sales  
Bill Reddoch, AVP Sales  
12770 Coit Road, Suite 1000  
Dallas, TX 75251  
800/487-3246; Fax: 972/705-9976  
sales@residentdata.com  
www.residentdata.com



## **Chicagoland Apartment Association** **Resident Screening**

### **Fidelity Information Corporation**

17383 Sunset Blvd., Suite A-370

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

(319) 573-9944

Toll Free (800) 845-1086

Fax (319) 230-0021

<http://www.gofic.com>

### **First Advantage Saferent**

310 Busse Highway #318

Park Ridge, IL 60068

George Lisenbe, Great Lakes Bus. Mgr.

(847) 297-6121

Toll Free (888) 297-8821

Fax (847) 297-6123

<http://www.FADVSaferent.com>

### **On-Site.Com**

1515 South Prairie Ave., Suite 405

Chicago, IL 60605

(708) 686-6749

Fax (877) 329-6674

<http://www.onsite.com>

### **Rentgrow, Inc.**

275 Wyman St.

Waltham, MA 02451

Kim, Brenna, Sales

(800) 736-8476

Fax (781) 290-0687

<http://www.rentgrow.com>

### **Resident Data, A Choicepoint Service**

12770 Coit Rd., Suite 1000

Dallas, TX 75251

Courtney Eovaldi, Regional Sales Mgr.

(972) 972-1480

Fax (972) 705-9976

<http://www.residentdata.com>

### **Residentcheck. Com**

4230 LBJ Freeway, Suite 400

Dallas, TX 75244

Michael Speanburg

(972) 419-0150

Fax (972) 233-5365

<http://residentcheck.com>

### **RS Group of Companies (Rentshield)**

15 West Lake Dr.

South Barrington, IL 60010

(847) 649-3354

Fax (847) 649-3084

<http://www.residentshield.com>

### **Screening Reports, Inc.**

729 N. Rt. 83, Suite 321

Bensenville, IL 60106

Timothy Fortner, Owner

(866) 389-4042

Fax (866) 389-4043

<http://www.screeningreports.com>

### **Transunion Credit Retriever**

5889 S. Greenwood Plaza Blvd. #201

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

John Hall, Marketing Mgr.

(303) 302-1930

Fax (412) 486-8780

<http://www.creditretriever.com>



## PART FOUR

### COMMUNITY RULES AND LEASE AGREEMENTS

#### LEASES

Property managers should routinely have their leases reviewed by their attorneys to insure that they remain current and accurate. As federal and state laws change and court decision are issued, some aspects of your current "standard" leases may become outdated. This could then affect your options should a lease violation or other incident occur which would possible have you considering an eviction of the tenant. You may wish to review the following points with your attorney or management company and if needed consider revising or adding to your current lease or lease addendum.

#### A. SUBLEASING

Subleasing should not permitted without authorization of management and then only upon completion of the applicant screening process. The person(s) who wish to sublease an apartment should receive the same approval as a standard tenant.

#### B. UNIT OCCUPANCY

Only those people noted on the lease may occupy the rental unit. Community rules governing residents should specify the length a guest may visit or stay and under what circumstances (length or number of guests) that management permission should be obtained. Any violation of this could constitute a lease violation allowing you to serve notice to terminate the lease agreement if the situation is not resolved. This is done to prevent your tenants from allowing others to "move in" to your community without your knowledge. You may even wish to take a "family picture" (digital type) of those people noted on the lease and authorized to occupy the unit. You can also explain the photo will be kept in the rental file for such instances as issuing a spare key in the event the tenant is locked out. The management can then insure that entry is not granted to unauthorized people for the security of the residents and their property.

#### C. DRUGS AND/OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

All prospective tenants, before leasing, should have a clear understanding that **drug or criminal activity related to the unit, its occupants or guests will not be tolerated**. This should be addressed in the community rules and even more importantly in a signed Crime Free or Drug Free Lease Addendum.

## **D. NUISANCE COMPLAINTS**

Reducing the opportunity for criminal activity is not the only goal of this program. Nuisance situations often cause disruptions to the quality of life within a multi-family housing community. Residents should not unduly or repeatedly disturb their neighbors. Again as part of the lease, an addendum, or in the community rules, you should clearly spell out what constitutes a violation. A certain number or type of nuisance complaints within a certain period of time (clearly specified) would constitute a lease violation and thus be grounds to serve a 10-day notice of termination. Additionally, tenants should understand that they would be held responsible for their own conduct, the conduct of their children and of their guests while on or near the property. You may also suggest to your tenants that they should contact the police for assistance should dangerous or illegal activities occur that is out of their control.

The Illinois Supreme Court has ruled that property owners/managers may ban non-tenants from their property.

## **MAKING RULES**

Property owners or managers may choose to develop a booklet that lists guidelines for expected behavior, restrictions on excessive noise or nuisance violations and other matters that are unique to your property and facilities. These items should be explained and the applicant will be asked to sign an addendum (or have it clearly noted in the rental agreement itself) indicating that community rules will be followed. If such groundwork is prepared, then rule violations could constitute a lease violation and serve as grounds to issue a 10-day notice of lease termination. As with all such matters, you should obtain legal assistance in reviewing and developing any such written materials prior to implementing them. Lastly, you should routinely review all materials and make necessary revisions to keep your paperwork "up to date."

## **USE OF THE CRIME FREE LEASE ADDENDUM**

If your current lease agreement does not contain sections pertaining to drug or criminal activity, you are required per Village Ordinance No. 0-09-02 to utilize a Crime Free lease addendum for any lease executed after May 1, 2009. Such an addendum, when signed by the tenant, makes criminal or drug activity a lease violation in addition to a police matter. You can then terminate a lease based on drug and criminal activity. The following page has a sample lease addendum.

## CRIME FREE LEASE ADDENDUM

In consideration of the execution or renewal of a lease of the dwelling unit identified in the lease, Owner and Resident agree as follows:

1. Resident, any members of the resident's household or a guest or other person under the resident's control shall not engage in criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, on or near the said premises. "Drug-related criminal activity" means the illegal manufacture, sale, distribution, use, or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use of a controlled substance (as defined in the Illinois Compiled Statutes).

2. Resident, any member of the resident's household or a guest or other person under the resident's control shall not engage in any act intended to facilitate criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, on or near the said premises.

3. Resident or members of the household will not permit the dwelling unit to be used for, or to facilitate criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, regardless or whether the individual engaging in such activity is a member of the household or a guest.

4. Resident, any member of the resident's household or a guest or another person under the resident's control shall not engage in the unlawful manufacturing, selling, using, storing, keeping, or giving of a controlled substance, at any locations, whether on or near the dwelling unit premises or otherwise.

5. Resident, any member of the resident's household, or a guest or another person under the resident's control shall not engage in any illegal activity, including prostitution, criminal street gang activity, threatening or intimidating, assault, including but not limited to the unlawful discharge of firearms, on or near the dwelling unit premises, or any breach of the lease agreement that otherwise jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of the landlord, his agent or other tenant or involving imminent or actual serious property damage.

6. **VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE PROVISIONS SHALL BE A MATERIAL AND IRREPARABLE VIOLATION OF THE LEASE AND GOOD CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF TENANCY.** A single violation of any of the provisions of this added addendum shall be deemed a serious violation and a material and irreparable non-compliance. It is understood that a single violation shall be good cause for immediate termination of the lease. Unless otherwise provided by law, proof of violation shall not require criminal conviction, but shall be by a preponderance of the evidence.

7. In case of conflict between the provisions of this addendum and any other provisions of the lease, the provisions of the addendum shall govern.

8. This LEASE ADDENDUM is incorporated into the lease executed or renewed this day between Owner and Resident.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Resident Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager's Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADICIÓN DE CONTRATO DE ARRENDAMIENTO PARA LA PROHIBICIÓN DE CRIMINALIDAD

En consideración por la ejecución de/ó la renovación del contrato de la unidad de vivienda identificada en el contrato, Dueño y Residente están de acuerdo a lo siguiente:

1. El residente, cualquier miembro residente del hogar ó su invitado ú otra persona bajo el control del residente no debe dedicarse a ninguna actividad criminal, incluyendo actividad criminal relacionada con drogas, en ó cerca de la vivienda mencionada. "Actividad criminal relacionada con drogas" quiere decir la manufactura ilegal, venta, distribución, uso, ó posesión con intento de manufacturar, vender, distribuir, ó usar el uso de una sustancia controlada (como esta definido en los Estatutos Compilados de Illinois).

2. El residente, cualquier miembro residente del hogar ó su invitado ú otra persona bajo el control del residente no deberá dedicarse a ningún acto con intento de facilitar actividad criminal, incluyendo actividad criminal relacionada con drogas, en ó cerca de la vivienda mencionada.

3. El residente ó miembros de la vivienda no le será permitido que la unidad de la vivienda sea usada para/ó, facilitar actividad criminal, incluyendo actividad criminal relacionada con drogas, sin importar si el individuo se dedica a esta actividad y es miembro del hogar ó es un invitado.

4. El residente, cualquier miembro residente del hogar ó su invitado ú otra persona bajo el control del residente no debe dedicarse a la manufactura ilícita, venta, uso, guardar, ó dar una sustancia controlada, en ninguna localidad sea ó no cerca de la unidad de vivienda residencial.

5. El residente, cualquier miembro en el hogar del residente, ó un invitado ó cualquier otra persona bajo el control del residente no deberá dedicarse a ninguna actividad ilegal, incluyendo prostitución, actividad criminal de pandillas callejeras, amenazas ó intimidación, agresión, incluyendo pero no limitada a la ejecución ilegal de armas de fuego, en ó cerca de la unidad de vivienda, ó cualquier incumplimiento del acuerdo del contrato que pueda poner en peligro la salud, seguridad y el bienestar del dueño, su administrador ú otro inquilino ó daño serio e inminente a la propiedad.

6. **LA VIOLACIÓN DE LAS PROVISIONES MENCIONADAS ARRIBA SERÁ MATERIAL Y VIOLACIÓN IRREPARABLE DEL CONTRATO Y BUENA CAUSA PARA TERMINACIÓN INMEDIATA DEL ALQUILER.** Una simple violación de cualquiera de las provisiones de esta adición de contrato será considerado una violación seria y material irreparable de no-cumplimiento. Es comprendido que una simple violación será Buena causa para inmediata terminación del contrato. Al menos que de otra manera sea provista por la ley, la prueba de la violación no requiera convicción criminal, pero debe ser por preponderancia de la evidencia.

7. En caso de conflicto entre los requisitos de esta adición de contrato y cualquier otro requisito del contrato, los requisitos de esta adición de contrato deben ser regidos y cumplirse.

8. Esta ADICIÓN DE CONTRATO esta incorporado al contrato ejecutado ó renovado este día entre el Dueño y el Residente.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Residente                      Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Residente                      Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Residente                      Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Administrador de la Propiedad                      Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART FIVE

### TO SERVE AND PROTECT?

#### THE POLICE WON'T TALK TO US

Frequently managers will complain that the police don't stop at the office to report why they are called to the property. There are some very legitimate reasons why.

- Some problems are so minor, the officer may not feel it warrants reporting. For example, a couple has a verbal dispute, as many people do, but no one is hurt; the situation is minor, and there is no reason to "air the dirty laundry" to the neighbors.

Though it may be the manager who walks up to the officer asking about the call, the officer may not feel it is appropriate to disclose the information. It is also possible the officer isn't certain the person is really the manager.

- Many times the officer is in a hurry to clear the call and get on to the next one that is waiting. Domestic calls take a lot of time in and of themselves, and officers are always being criticized about their response time by the next person who is waiting. The time it takes to locate a manager (and re-tell the whole story) can easily amount to 15 minutes, a half hour or more. This is especially true when the manager has a lot they want to say to the officer as well.



- Some officers feel the manager isn't going to follow through anyway. Though it may be hard to believe, there are property managers that are nosey. They never follow through with the appropriate notices; they just want to know everybody's business.

If a police officer knows the property manager actually follows through with an appropriate course of action, there is greater incentive to talk with the manager. The officer really doesn't want to have to keep coming back for the same problem over and over again.

Meet with the officer, even if you have to call the dispatcher to schedule an appointment. When the officer arrives, let them know you are an active member of the CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM and you are willing to work with the police. Meeting the officer is the first step.

Keep in mind, one officer works day shift, one works the afternoon shift, and one works the midnight shift. Also, other officers fill in on their days off! It could take a



while to meet them all.

## PRIVACY LAWS

There is another very key issue to be addressed. That is the issue of privacy laws. A police officer cannot stop by in person or leave a card in the office telling you the "who, what, when, where, why and how."

The officer is more likely to give you a case number, and as a matter of public record, you can request a copy of the police report. Always try to get the case number if you get nothing else. While the officer may not be able to give you the names of the persons involved, they may be able to give you the unit number they went to.

*THERE ARE VERY STRICT  
PRIVACY LAWS THAT  
PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF  
RESIDENTS...EVEN THE  
RESIDENTS THAT BREAK  
THE LAW.*



One of the benefits of being a **fully certified member** of the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** is that you can contact the Crime Free office to discuss the frequency and types of calls your property is receiving.

## HOW TO APPROACH THE OFFICER

If you see a police officer on a call at one of your rental units, do not approach -- stay back. The situation may become very volatile at any moment. The officer may order you to stand back for your own safety.

If you are certain things are settled, you can get the officer's attention and introduce yourself as the manager and ask to see the officer when they are through with the call. The less you say at this point, generally the better. Stand at a safe distance, but wait for the officer. Don't go back to the office.

When the officer is finished, let them know you are working with the **CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM** and get a case number. Sometimes, a case is not drawn up and no report will be written. The officer will let you know.

If the officer is able to give you more information, it will help you follow through with the necessary steps you must take. If not, get a copy of the report. Let the officer know that you do plan to follow through, and you would appreciate working with them in the future.



## ESTABLISHING MORE

If a property manager has a **serious** problem with crime, they may choose to hire off-duty officers to patrol the property. This is a very effective way to solve serious problems with residents. If a manager cannot do that, they may want to consider private security.

*A HIGH POLICE PRESENCE  
WILL DEMONSTRATE TO  
THE RESIDENTS THAT  
MANAGEMENT IS SERIOUS  
ABOUT ADDRESSING  
PROBLEMS.*



## REQUESTING "EXTRA" PATROL

Frequently managers will call requesting "extra" patrol. While it never hurts to ask, it may not help either. There are hundreds of rental properties in Addison, many more properties than we have patrol officers. One thing they all have in common is they want extra patrol visits through their property.

It is important to understand that many places of business in Addison are going to request extra patrols in their area throughout the year, and it is impossible to satisfy all requests since police officers have other responsibilities in patrol. Each shift in Addison has an assigned shift sergeant, and, if necessary, the property manager should contact the sergeant to address any concerns they may have about the property. The sergeant will then pass that information on to the patrol officers that work that area, so that everyone is aware of your concerns and can address the situation appropriately.



And, of course, there are thousands of residents that want extra patrol in their residential neighborhoods. Everyone wants to see more police patrols in their neighborhoods.

There are still others that feel the police ought to spend more time writing tickets for speeders and people who don't use turn signals. There just aren't enough police officers to fill all those needs.

Unfortunately, the police officers cannot provide security for everyone who asks. Even if they could visit the property a couple of times per day, the likelihood that they would be at the right place at precisely the right time is very slim. The best efforts will include officers that can spend hours at the property. Random passes through the property are ineffective and at times not possible.

## NARCOTICS SURVEILLANCE

Property managers will also call the police requesting an investigator to set up surveillance on a resident they suspect of using or dealing drugs. While managers are aware the detectives are not sitting by the phone hoping somebody will call soon, they may not know how many calls are received.


Detectives are highly trained and do excellent work because they have methods that work so well. Typically, they rely on a person to introduce them to a suspect whenever possible. If they can get close to an operation, they are more likely not only to make an arrest, but also to arrest several people. If the quantities are high, they are likely to get prison time for the offender. The higher up the supply line that they penetrate, the more successful the operation.

The end user is not going to get the prison time or produce all of the other results the detectives are after. They want the "bigger fish to fry." They work the more serious cases. There are more calls than the police have detectives. It is a matter of prioritization.

## MANAGEMENT SURVEILLANCE

You should call to report the drug activity because you may be providing the very key information the police have been looking for. You should also document other behaviors associated with the drug activity and serve the appropriate notices. There are usually a string of other evictable offenses that managers overlook, trying to prove somebody is into drug activity.

Rarely have property managers confronted residents with their suspicions, yet they call the police. When asked why they haven't confronted the resident, they say, "I don't have any proof." Think about that. **The police need a whole lot more proof than the manager does. The police can't do anything without the proof either.**



IF YOU DON'T HAVE  
ENOUGH PROOF TO EVICT  
A SUSPECTED DRUG  
DEALER, THE POLICE DON'T  
HAVE ENOUGH PROOF TO  
ARREST THEM EITHER.

Why can't the police just watch and get the proof?

There just aren't enough detectives available. The better question is "Why don't the property management teams watch the resident and get the proof?" It is much easier for those who live and work on the property to watch what is going on. They know who lives at and belongs on the property; the police don't. Because management needs a lot less proof than the police do, they will get faster results civilly.

Setting up video cameras or recording license plates may provide clues, but they may also spark retaliation from the resident. Whatever action is taken, safety should always be foremost.

## **"BUT I'M SCARED!"**

Because the potential for danger is there, **property managers should be more selective and forceful with prospective residents.** If policies are not strictly stated in the beginning, they will be harder to enforce in the end. Prevention is the key.

Most residents will stop drug activity if they find out the manager is onto them. The reason most people continue this activity is because they know the manager is afraid to confront them. Even if the police arrest a resident, you will have to evict them and others on the lease. They will come back awaiting trial in most cases.



## **PART SIX**

### **EVICITION PROCEDURES IN ILLINOIS**

In Illinois, the law which defines the process of eviction in this state is known as the Forcible Entry and Detainer Act. The Forcible Entry and Detainer courts are known as courts of limited jurisdiction. This means that only claims for possession and rents can be heard. The court will not allow unrelated counterclaims regarding the operation of the property. Therefore, a Forcible Entry and Detainer action is quick, simple and efficient. In order to ensure that your case is heard quickly, it is important that managers and landlords familiarize themselves with some of the basic procedures for proceeding with a forcible action. The following guideline is meant to answer some basic questions regarding the forcible process:

#### **When should I consider evicting a tenant?**

Non-payment of rent is an obvious reason for evicting a tenant. However, the decision to evict a tenant for failing to abide by the specific terms of a lease is a more difficult decision. Effective property management includes the early recognition of noncompliance and immediate response to the problems associated with these behaviors. If you do not resolve problems quickly, you will find that you may jeopardize your ability to handle problems in the future. Most problem tenants exhibit noncompliance behaviors shortly after they move in. If you move quickly, you will find that tenants will stop believing that they can get away with noncompliant behavior. Many landlords do not take action because they do not want to get involved in the legal system. However, the penalty for indecision can be high. For instance, if you accept rent from a tenant who is noncompliant, you may lose your right to evict for the noncompliance at a future date. If you fail to take action against a tenant who is engaged in noncompliant behavior and that behavior later causes damage or injury to another tenant, you may find yourself liable for damages. You will also find that other residents will assume that they can also get away with similar behaviors. The end result may very well be deterioration in the value of the property and an inability to get good, high quality tenants. Do not wait. Implement a policy that ensures residents are treated fairly, yet deals with problems in a consistent, yet forcible manner. Know your options. Understand the eviction process.

#### **Can I evict a tenant for dealing drugs or engaging in illegal activity inside their unit?**

Yes, you can. However, proving that there is drug dealing can be difficult. In order to increase your chances of successfully evicting this type of tenant, you are required to include a drug free addendum in your lease. Of course, it is illegal to use or deal drugs, but putting it in your rental agreement reinforces the idea that property management is committed to upholding the law. The biggest hurdle you have to overcome in evicting a tenant for drug use is proving that drug use is happening. If there has been a drug arrest in your building, the prosecuting attorney may be reluctant to allow police officers or other witnesses to testify in a civil eviction proceeding because of the fear that the criminal case may be jeopardized. However, many municipalities are not only participating in seeking to evict drug dealers from the communities, they are actively encouraging the landlord to take

action. There are some things that you can do to bolster your case at court. Keep accurate records. Record the number of visitors that come and go into the apartment. Keep records of every disturbance that is reported from the building. Talk to your local police department regarding your suspicions. Ask the police to provide you with copies of police reports relating to disturbances at the building. Even if you cannot ultimately prove that the tenant is taking or dealing drugs, you can probably prove that his behavior has unduly disturbed other tenants and neighbors and is interfering with the neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of the premises.

### **Do I need an attorney?**

Not necessarily but it is highly recommended. However, some areas of eviction law are very complicated and detailed. Strict compliance with the statute is necessary because eviction is a drastic remedy. An attorney that is familiar with the Forcible Entry and Detainer Act can cut down on continuances and ultimately save you money. Many eviction attorneys will charge only two or three hundred dollars for a simple eviction. As long as your lease contains a provision for recovery of attorney fees, you also may be able to have your tenant reimburse you for this cost.

If you do choose to file a forcible action without an attorney, take the time to become familiar with court procedures. Spend an hour in the forcible court before your case is heard so that you can become familiar with the way these types of cases are handled. Many eviction cases are lost simply because the landlord is unfamiliar with the court process and does not have the proper paperwork at the time of hearing.

### **Do I need to serve any notices on a tenant before I actually start court proceedings?**

Yes. Serving proper notice on a tenant is generally a prerequisite to filing a Forcible Entry and Detainer action. Generally, the proper service of notice is "jurisdictional." This means that if you do not do it correctly, the judge will have no choice but to dismiss your lawsuit. You will then have to start all over again. The following is a brief summary of the types of notice that can be served on a noncompliant tenant.

**A. 5-Day Notice.** This type of notice is served when a tenant is behind in the payment of rent. It provides that if all amounts are not paid within 5 days, the landlord will terminate the lease. It is important that the landlord not accept anything less than full payment of all amounts which are due and owing during this 5-day period unless very specific steps are followed. Partial payments may void the 5-day notice. A 5-day notice can also be used when the tenant uses the premises for drug activity. If the tenant utilizes the leased premises for the purpose of unlawfully possessing, serving, storing, manufacturing, cultivating, delivering, using, selling or giving away controlled substances, then the landlord has the option to void the tenant's lease. The first step in voiding the lease is the service of a 5-day notice that the lease is being terminated. The notice should state the reasons for eviction.

**B. 10-Day Notice.** When a default is made in any of the terms of the lease, it is not necessary to give more than 10 days notice of the landlord's intent to terminate the lease. Such notice may be in the following form: *"You are hereby notified that in consequence of your default in (insert character of the default) of the premises now occupied by you, being (here describe the premises), I have elected to terminate your lease, and you are hereby notified to quit and deliver up possession of the*

*same to me within 10 days of this date."* No other notice is necessary to terminate the tenant's lease. This type of notice can be used in cases where a tenant engaged in behavior which disturbs the peace, damages property or otherwise is prohibited under the terms of the lease.

**C. 30-Day Notice.** This notice is used to terminate a tenant who is occupying the premises on a month-to-month basis or whose lease term is close to expiration. In addition, a 30-day notice is required in order to evict a unit owner who is delinquent in the payment of condominium assessments.

#### **How do I serve these notices?**

There are three basic methods for service of a notice on a tenant: (1) You can serve the notice on the person or a person at least 13 years of age who resides in the premises. (2) The notice can be sent by certified or registered mail with a return receipt from the tenant. (3) If no person is in actual possession of the premises, the notice can be posted on the door. Make sure that you do not serve the original notarized copy of the notice. This portion of the notice should be completed only after a copy has been served. The original notarized copy should be brought to court on the day of the forcible entry.

#### **Now that I have made the decision that I need to have a tenant leave, what are the basic steps for evicting a tenant for noncompliance with a lease?**

The process is relatively simple. It is also what is called an expedited process. This means that you can obtain relief relatively quickly. First, a tenant should be served with the appropriate notice. Second, a Forcible Entry and Detainer action is filed. Third, the landlord must serve the tenant. Fourth, an Order of Possession should be entered at the court hearing. Fifth, the Order of Possession must be placed with the Sheriff for eviction.

#### **What forms does a landlord need to have in dealing with eviction actions?**

The most frequently used forms are as follows:

- 5-day notice \_\_\_\_\_
- Forcible Entry and Detainer complaint
- Forcible summons
- Order of Possession
- Motion for special process service
- Notice of posting
- Affidavit for posting

- Additional copies of these forms can be obtained at any office supply store or at the Clerk's office located at the DuPage County courthouse.

#### **Which courthouse do I have to use when I want to file an eviction action?**

Eviction actions should be filed in the municipal district where the property is located. For housing located in the Addison area, most evictions are filed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court located at 505 N. County Farm Road in Wheaton. Almost all eviction actions are heard in Courtroom 1003. There are generally two court calls, one beginning at 0830 hours and one beginning at 1330 hours. Always find out if rooms and times have changed, as they sometimes do frequently.



### **How do I actually file the case once I get to the courthouse?**

The initial eviction case will be filed in the Clerk's office located on the main floor. You will need to have your complaint, summons and civil cover sheet at the time of the filing. The cost for filing a forcible entry in Wheaton is about \$175.00. After the clerk files the case, you will need to place the summons for service with the Sheriff's office. The Sheriff's office is located at 501 N. County Farm Road in Wheaton.

### **What do I need to do before I go to court?**

The most important thing you need to do is to make sure that your tenant is properly served. There is nothing that a judge can do until you obtain service on the defendant. If the Sheriff cannot serve your tenant with legal papers, there are several options that will supplement the Sheriff's Department. You can appoint a special process server. The process server must be at least 18 years of age and not a party to the action. You must have a judge sign your order. The advantage of having your papers personally served is that you can get a monetary judgment against your tenant. This means that you can collect your judgment more easily. If your main objective is to evict the tenant, you can also obtain service by "posting." Posting service allows you to obtain "possession" of the property. This type of service is accomplished by the filing of an affidavit with the Clerk's office. This affidavit and the posting notice are filed with the Sheriff. The Sheriff posts the summons at the Sheriff's office and sends a postcard to the tenant. After ten days, posting service is complete, and you can proceed with the entry of an Order of Possession.

### **What should I bring to court?**

There are several documents that are absolutely essential to a forcible entry case. These documents should be brought to every single court call. These documents include an executed copy of the lease, a signed copy of your notice, a copy of your complaint, a copy of your proof of proper service on the defendant, and any other documents that support your claim against the tenant. If your claim is for non-payment of rents, be sure to have a list of payments that have been made by the tenant. Many tenants will try and confuse the issues by producing a cancelled check and suggesting it was for payment of rent for the months in question. You may find that this check was actually used for back rental payments. Be organized. You will find that forcible entry court is what is commonly called a "high volume" courtroom. There may be 30 or 40 cases on a typical morning court call. Be observant of the cases that are called before you. You will find that each judge has his or her own procedures. Try to organize your documents in a way that will complement the judge's procedures.

### **What happens after I am awarded an Order of Possession by the judge?**

The entry of an Order of Possession is not the end of the forcible action. Until the tenant is evicted, your court case has not really accomplished anything. Generally, the judge will enter the order and stay execution for a period of 7 to 14 days. This means that the order cannot be placed with the Sheriff for eviction for that period of time. After the stay has expired, the Order of Possession must be given to the Sheriff for service. The fee for eviction is around \$120.00. You will need to be available on the day that the Sheriff comes out to the unit to evict the tenant, so it is important that you know when an eviction is scheduled. The Sheriff's Department may require you to be present.

**I am on the board of a condo association. Can we do anything about a unit that is**



**occupied by a tenant who refuses to abide by association rules?**

**Absolutely.** The Condominium Property Act provides that all of the associations' declaration, by-laws and rules and regulations shall apply to a tenant and shall be incorporated into any lease executed for a unit located in the association. The board of managers may proceed directly against a tenant at law or in equity, or under the provisions of the Forcible Entry Act, for any other breach by tenant of any covenants, rules, regulations or by-laws. This means that even if a landlord will not take action against a tenant who is violating association rules, the board can. In addition, the board can charge back all the attorney's fees, court costs and expenses in removing the tenant from the property.

**Can I do anything to protect my right to evict a tenant even before he moves in?**

**Yes.** Careful drafting of your lease can increase your chances of successfully managing your tenants. Include a drug free addendum in your lease. Make it clear that drug use in the property will not be tolerated. Include a provision that clearly states that tenants will be held responsible for the conduct of their guests as well as for their conduct. The Illinois Supreme Court has stated that an owner can evict a tenant whose guests violate the leasing rules. Ensure that the tenant will be responsible for ensuring that anybody in his unit will conduct themselves in a manner that will not interfere with the neighbor's peaceful enjoyment of the premises.





## Order of Forcible Entry and Detainer Procedures

1. An order for a forcible entry and detainer will not be accepted until the stay date has expired. Two (2) writ certification stamped copies of the order are required. The order must have the name(s) of the defendant(s) and the exact address of the property, including apartment, building or suite number. Wrong or incomplete addresses are the major reason for forcible entry and detainers being unenforceable. There is a non-refundable fee of \$200.
2. Three (3) business days after the order is received by this office the plaintiff must contact the eviction department at (630) 407-2054 to schedule the physical eviction. A deputy will post a "red notice" on the property indicating the date and time of the physical eviction. This action often results in the defendant(s) moving out of their own accord.
3. Using force to effect an eviction can become costly to the plaintiff and traumatic to the defendant. Therefore, the office has established a set of procedures to encourage the defendant to voluntarily vacate the premises; a copy of the order is either personally served or posted on the door of the property and a letter is sent to the defendant advising them they will be evicted "as soon as scheduling permits."
4. The plaintiff, or his/her agent is required to be present on-site during the entire eviction process. The plaintiff must provide a minimum of three (3) able-bodied movers, a locksmith or maintenance person to change the locks, plastic bags, and tarp or plastic cover in case of inclement weather.
5. The defendant's personal property will be removed from the property to a area designed by the on-site deputy. This property must remain undisturbed by the plaintiff for 24 hours. After 24 hours it is the responsibility of the plaintiff to remove all items still remaining at the site. It is also the plaintiff's responsibility to have any vehicles on the premises removed.
6. The eviction fee covers the first 1/2 hour of the deputy's time. If additional stand-by time is necessary, the plaintiff will be billed accordingly with a 2 hour minimum charge of \$80.00 per hour.
7. Emergency eviction requests must include documentation to justify the emergency. Requests will be authorized on a case by case basis.
8. If the defendants move out prior to the eviction date, the eviction office must be notified immediately.

### Civil Process

[Civil Process Overview](#)

[Fees](#)

[Foreclosure Listings](#)

[Foreclosure Research](#)

[Order of Forcible Entry and](#)

[Detainer Procedures](#)

[Personal Levy](#)

[Personal Levy Research](#)

[Real Estate Levy](#)

[Real Estate Property Levy](#)

[Instructions](#)

[Writ of Replevin](#)



Fees

Additional Information

- More than one service of the same case number at the same address - First paper, full town fee, additional papers, \$30 each.
- Alias Summons - Same as summons fee
- Real Estate Levys - \$1000 if property goes to sale; \$150 if levy is released prior to Sheriff appraising the property; \$300 if levy is released after the appraisal prior to the Sheriff publishing and setting a sale date; \$500 if levy is released after publishing and setting a sale date but prior to sale.
- Writ of Execution and Personal Property Levys - Town fee plus \$80 per hour plus any costs for possession and removal.
- Writ of Replevin - \$400 plus costs (towing, storage, locksmith.)
- Forcible Entry and Detainer, Writ of Restitution, Order for Possession - \$200 (includes first 1/2 hour on site, thereafter, \$80 per hour.)  
Minimum rescheduling fee - \$160
- Body Attachment - Town fee or out of county fee.
- Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) - Same as service fee.
- Notice of Posting - \$25
- Take Notice/Certified Mailing Service - \$30

Town	Fee
Addison	\$47
Aurora*	\$52
Argonne/Lemont*	\$56
Bartlett*	\$46
Batavia* (Fermi Lab only)	\$46
Bensenville*	\$51
Bloomingtondale	\$45
Bolingbrook*	\$52
Burr Ridge*	\$56
Carol Stream	\$43
Clarendon Hills	\$50
Darien	\$54
Downers Grove	\$47
Elk Grove Village*	\$50
Elmhurst*	\$48
Eola*	\$46
Glen Ellyn	\$43
Glendale Heights	\$44
Hanover Park*	\$45
Hinsdale*	\$51
Itasca	\$48
Keeneyville	\$44
Lemont*	\$56
Lisle	\$45
Lombard	\$44
Medinah	\$48
Naperville*	\$45

Oak Brook	\$48
Oakbrook Terrace	\$47
Roselle*	\$48
St. Charles*	\$44
Villa Park	\$47
Warrenville	\$43
Wayne*	\$46
West Chicago	\$42
Westmont	\$49
Wheaton/counter service	\$40
Willowbrook	\$53
Winfield	\$40
Wood Dale	\$50
Woodridge*	\$51

\*Some addresses may be in another county



Landlord creates good, effective Lease



```
graph LR; A[Landlord creates good, effective Lease] --> B[Tenant signs Lease, moves in]; B --> C[Tenant stops paying rent, uses drugs ... - 5-day notice]; C --> D[Other Violations - 10-day notice]; D --> E[End of Lease approaching. Landlord does not want to renew Lease - 30-day notice];
```

Tenant signs Lease,  
moves in

Tenant stops paying rent, uses drugs ...  
- 5-day notice

Other Violations  
- 10-day notice

End of Lease approaching. Landlord does not  
want to renew Lease  
- 30-day notice

After notice, file complaints and summons  
coversheet

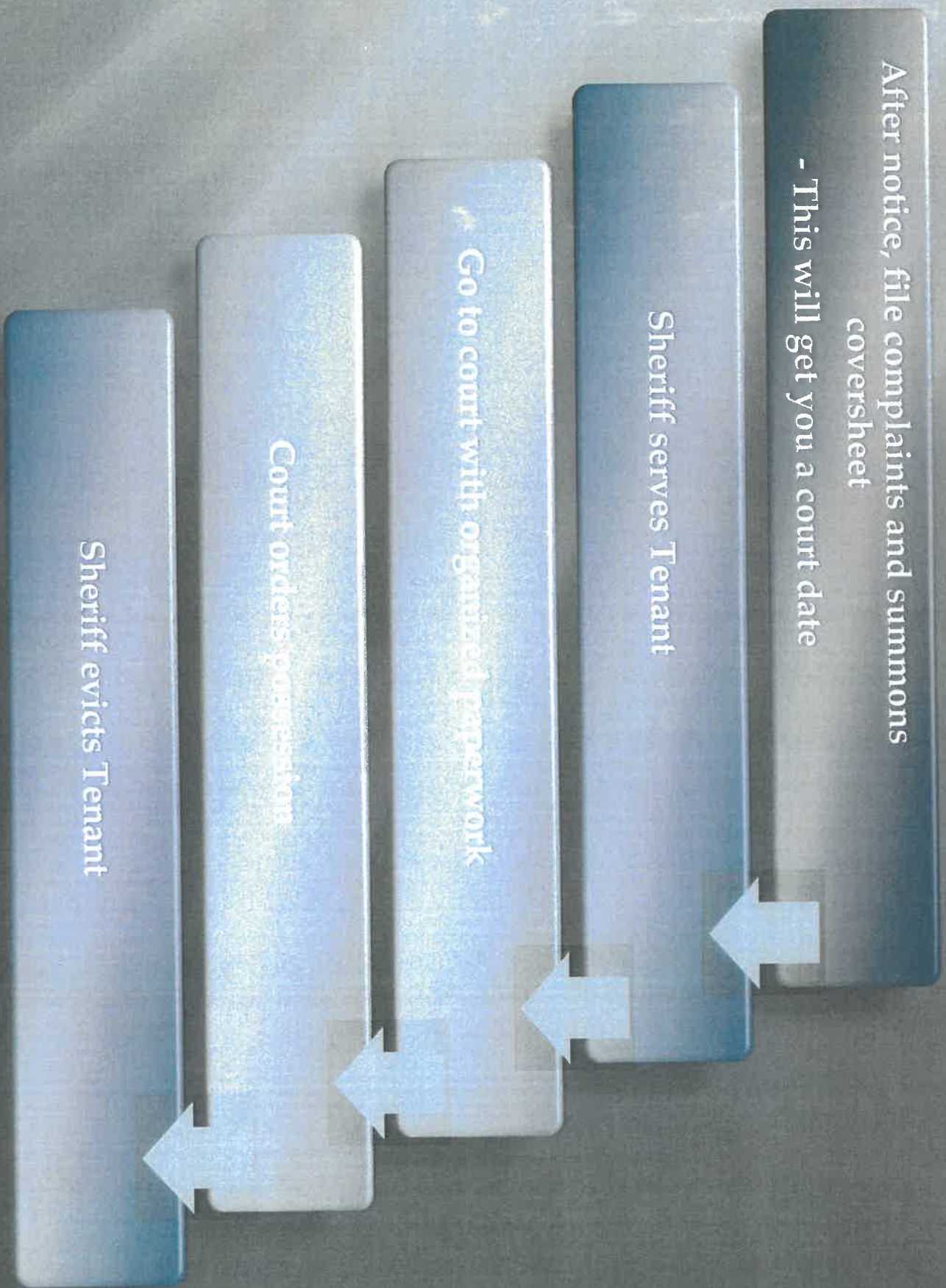
- This will get you a court date

Sheriff serves Tenant

Go to court with organized paperwork

Court orders possession

Sheriff evicts Tenant





## RENTERS HANDBOOK

### 2017 Edition

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## **Introduction**

This handbook does not explain all there is to know about renting, but it does provide helpful information on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant in Illinois. The Table of Contents gives the titles of all the areas covered in this handbook. This will allow you to read the sections that interest you the most. Like any area of law, landlord-tenant law can be complex, and answers to different questions can overlap. Therefore, many of the sections of this handbook repeat information that is part of other sections or refer to other sections. This repetition was done on purpose, to make it as easy as possible for you to find answers to your questions.

This handbook is not intended to be a substitute for legal advice specific to your situation; it does not replace an attorney. Each individual situation is unique. The information in this handbook applies to general housing situations and should help you avoid many problems before they happen. There are times when it would be wise to talk with an attorney and there are other times when it is essential to do so. That decision is one that only you can make.

If you need to consult an attorney, but cannot afford one and you live in one of the 36 counties served by Prairie State Legal Services, please call the nearest Prairie State office. The offices and telephone numbers are listed at the back of this handbook.

If you live in a county not served by Prairie State and cannot afford an attorney, please contact one of the other federally-funded legal services programs that are also listed in the back of this handbook.

For individuals who are above legal services income guidelines, you may contact either the Illinois State Bar Association Lawyer Referral Program (217/525-5297), a county Lawyer Referral Program, or a private attorney. Also, there are free legal forms and information provided on the Illinois Legal Aid Online website, [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org).

Some communities in Illinois have their own landlord-tenant ordinances. For example, if you live in Cook County, your rights may be very different from the rights in this handbook. The Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance gives tenants in Chicago rights in addition to the ones provided by Illinois law. A local ordinance cannot take away rights that state law provides. If your community has its own ordinances, those laws may provide you with additional or different rights and responsibilities. Please read the ordinances carefully. You can get a copy at your city or village hall, and possibly online.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This handbook was revised in 2017. Laws change often. The handbook is current as of July 2017. Be sure to check online at [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org) where you may be able to learn about changes that have taken place since this handbook was written.

### **Tips for Renters**

- If you are not in an emergency situation, take the time to choose your house or apartment as carefully as you can. If the place is in bad shape when you rent it, it may be hard later to complain about the conditions. If the property needs repairs, talk about the conditions with the landlord and come to an agreement on the repairs.
- If you do not have a lot of money for rent or you have an unfavorable credit report, you may find that you do not have many good options for renting a house or apartment. Most places you can afford may need repairs. This is one reason that you should not wait until the last minute to look for a place to rent. The more time you allow yourself, the less likely you will be to have to take a unit that is in bad shape. If the house or apartment you choose does need repairs, making an agreement in writing as part of the lease that the landlord will make the repairs is the best course; once you sign the lease the landlord has less motive to agree to make the repairs because you already have committed.
- Do an inspection before you agree to rent and sign a lease. Use Prairie State's Move-in/Move-out Checklist. When you move in, take pictures so you will have proof of any problems which already existed, and can prove you did not cause them.
- Get it in writing! It is almost always better to have a written lease. If a landlord makes a promise to you, for example to make a repair, get that promise in writing.
- Read the lease as well as you can. You need to know what your responsibilities are under the lease. For example, you need to know if any utilities are included in the rent, and which utilities you need to pay. Some leases ban pets or limit people who can visit you. If you violate these types of lease requirements, you may face eviction, so be sure you know what the lease says before you agree to rent.
- Get a copy of your lease and keep it in a safe place! A legal size envelope is a good idea, so that you can keep copies of all the papers about your house or apartment in one place. Keep copies of all communications between you and your landlord.
- Paying your rent is your top priority. Many people think that a judge won't evict them if it's cold outside, if they have children, if they are sick, or if they have no



place to go. That is wrong! Under the law, if you violate your lease, you can be evicted no matter how bad the weather is, no matter whether you have children or how many children you have, no matter what your health is, and even if you have no place to go!

- Get receipts for your rent and security deposit! Pay by check or money order if you can, and get a receipt. If the landlord does not give you a receipt, make one yourself and ask the landlord to sign it. Keep the receipts and anything else you have to prove you paid rent in the envelope where you are keeping your lease.
- Try to keep a good working relationship with your landlord. For example, if the landlord does not make repairs promptly, keep in contact with the landlord to make progress on them. Always be pleasant but be direct about what you need.
- If there are problems with the house or apartment, don't just stop paying rent! There are other ways to try to get the landlord to make repairs.
- If you get a notice of termination of tenancy, a five-day notice to pay rent, or any other notice that your landlord is ending your lease or plans to evict you, contact an attorney. The sooner you get legal advice the better! Prairie State Legal Services has lawyers who have experience in landlord-tenant problems. If you qualify for free legal help, Prairie State can give you advice and possibly represent you in court.
- Your landlord cannot make you leave without a court order. If the landlord locks you out or tries to evict you without a court order, the police might be willing to help. Contact Prairie State to find out whether we can help.
- To help make sure you get your security deposit back, remove all of your things from the unit when you move out. Remove all trash and clean the home. Use the Prairie State Move-In/Move-Out Checklist again to note the condition of the home. Take photos. If possible, go through the home with the landlord, ask the landlord to sign off that he will return the deposit, and hand over all the keys. Otherwise be sure to return the keys to the landlord following the landlord's instructions.

## **Becoming a Renter**

### **Rent a Place You Can Afford**

Whether you are on a fixed income or have a steady job, you must consider the amount you will be required to pay for rent and other housing costs. To know whether or not you will be able to afford a certain home or apartment, you must look at your budget.

First, figure out the lease rent. The lease rent is the amount of money that your lease or your landlord states you will pay. Depending on what is included in the rent you pay your landlord, you may have other expenses for the house or apartment that are not covered in your lease rent. It is important to figure out the total amount of money that it will cost to live in your house or apartment – your total housing costs. Here are some of the expenses for which you might be responsible:

1. The cost of utilities like heat, electricity, natural gas, water, sewer service or garbage collection if your landlord is not paying them;
2. Phone, internet, cable bills;
3. Any additional costs for pets or parking; and,
4. Furniture you might need to buy if the unit is not furnished.

Add all these expenses to the amount of rent in the lease to get your total housing costs. Next, decide whether you can afford this amount. Budget counselors advise spending no more than about 30 % of your take home income on rent and other housing costs. But if you are on a limited income such as Social Security, SSI or TANF, or if you are working at minimum wage, it will be very difficult for you to spend only 30% of your income on rent. Usually one-third, one-half or more of your income will go to rent and other housing costs.

Either way, it is very important to use a budget. To see how much you can afford, take into account the following when budgeting:

Groceries, per month	\$ _____
Clothes, per month	\$ _____
Medicine, per month	\$ _____
Transportation, per month	\$ _____
Laundry, per month	\$ _____
Leisure Activities, per month	\$ _____
Other, per month	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Now check to see what you have left from your income. If you work, be sure that you are looking at your income after taxes and other deductions. If you do not have enough to pay rent, you might want to cut back in other areas. If you are not able to cut back in the other areas, then you will need to find an apartment with lower rent.

Your rent is one of your most important expenses because you must pay your rent so you have a roof over your head, but be reasonable. If you do not have enough food for the month after paying your rent, you cannot afford the place. Renting an apartment or a house is a big responsibility and involves a lot of money, so make sure you can afford it.



## Finding the Right Apartment for You

Before you decide to rent, the following tips can be helpful:

1. Read the sections in this handbook on leases and security deposits very carefully.
2. Check how close the rental unit is to supermarkets, laundry facilities, transportation and your place of employment or school.
3. Check with the neighbors in the area for their opinions on the location, the landlord, the safety of the building and the neighborhood.
4. Bring the housing code violation checklist with you and check the unit thoroughly. See the "Housing Code/Apartment Search Checklist" section of this handbook on page 30.
5. Find out if you will be responsible for paying utilities and garbage collection bills. If you will be responsible, check with former tenants about the amount of the bills.
6. If you will be sharing the unit with other people, be sure to visit the unit together when possible. Take a look at the section of this handbook on *Issues that Can Come Up When You Share an Apartment*, at page 19.
7. Make a written list of all furnishings and anything else that the landlord has promised. Have the landlord sign this list and attach it to the lease. Check the condition of all furniture.
8. Check the security of the building. See the *Security and Safety* section of this handbook on page 37.
9. If parking is to be provided, make sure you know where it is and that it meets your needs. Make sure your lease states that you get a guaranteed parking space, especially if you have to pay an extra charge for it.
10. Find out who is expected to take care of the grounds, halls and sidewalks.
11. Check for fire exits.
12. Beware of basement apartments. These are more likely to have bugs, floods and burglars.
13. Turn on water taps, flush the toilet and check the working condition of all appliances.
14. Check under the baseboards and around radiators for holes that may indicate the presence of mice, bugs or air leaks. Check cupboards and dark corners of the kitchen and bathroom for any evidence of insects. Ask about extermination. Is it done on a regular basis? Is this guaranteed in the lease? Are you or is the landlord responsible for payment of extermination services during the lease period?
15. Check to see if the electrical wiring is safe. Are there enough outlets?
16. Find out if there are enough windows to provide adequate light and air. Do windows and locks operate properly? Does the landlord provide screens and storm windows, as may be required by your local housing code?
17. Whatever promises the landlord makes to you, you will want to get those promises in writing. For more information on this, look at *Get it in Writing* starting on page 14.
18. Find out whether the property is in foreclosure. See the information on the rights of tenants in foreclosed properties in this handbook at page 72 for information on how to do this.
19. If you have doubts about the landlord or the property, don't pay a deposit or sign a lease. It is easier to walk away and keep looking for a place that is right for you than it is to break a lease that you regret signing.

## Discrimination and Housing

When you are searching for a house or an apartment, or already living in one, it is important to remember that it is unlawful for a landlord to discriminate against you in housing.

Housing discrimination may occur when a landlord (or other housing provider) treats you less favorably than other tenants *because of* a personal trait that is protected under the laws. Housing discrimination could also occur when a landlord has a policy or practice that more negatively affects one group of people protected under the laws than another group of people. Although housing discrimination could be obvious (for example, a landlord states she does not rent to families with children), often it may be subtle and hidden (for example, a for-rent sign remains posted long after you were told the place was no longer available).

Federal law makes it unlawful for a landlord to discriminate because of certain personal traits. Those traits are race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, sex (gender), and disability. Familial status refers to households with minor children or seeking custody of minor children, or women who are pregnant. No landlord can refuse to rent to you, refuse to talk to you about an apartment, or force you to leave an apartment because of one of these personal traits. These traits are not related to your ability to be a good tenant.

In addition to those traits protected under federal law, Illinois law makes it unlawful for a landlord to discriminate because of age, ancestry, marital status, military status, unfavorable military discharge status, sexual orientation, or order of protection status. In some Illinois cities or counties, local law may protect additional personal traits, for example, source of income or student status.

Both federal and state laws offer special protections for people with disabilities. A person with a disability has the right to request a reasonable accommodation from his or her landlord, and the right to install reasonable modifications in his or her apartment or building. The purpose of a reasonable accommodation or modification is to give a person with a disability equal opportunity to fully use and enjoy his or her apartment. If a landlord refuses to grant an exception to a rule, policy, or service (reasonable accommodation) or refuses to allow a tenant to make a physical change to the property (reasonable modification), this could be housing discrimination.

When requesting a reasonable accommodation or asking for permission to install a reasonable modification that is not obviously related to a visible disability, a tenant may wish to give the landlord a note from his or her medical provider (a doctor, psychiatrist, caseworker, etc.) to support the request. The note should explain how the request helps the patient to fully use and enjoy the apartment despite the effects of a disability. If a landlord intends to deny a request, the landlord must meet with the tenant to discuss possible alternative solutions. This is called the “interactive process.”

Common examples of reasonable accommodations requests are:

- Permission to permanently park in a parking space close to the building because a tenant has a disability that impairs his or her ability to walk long distances
- Permission to have a service or support animal as an exception to a “no pets” policy because the animal assists the tenant as he or she copes with a disability
- Providing a sign language interpreter in order to help a tenant who is deaf or hard of hearing understand important meetings with a landlord
- Allowing a live-in aide to move into a unit in order to provide personal services to a tenant with a disability
- Providing additional snow-shoveling services for a tenant who uses a wheelchair

Other examples of potential housing discrimination include:

- Lying about housing availability  
For example: A leasing agent states, "I'm sorry, it's just been rented" but the ad is still online for many weeks.
- Refusal to rent or sell  
For example: An agent states, "The owner does not want families with children on the upper floor."
- Refusal to return phone calls or negotiate for housing  
For example: You do not receive a call back from a landlord after you mentioned in your voice message that you have children, but your friend (who is single without kids) calls the landlord and receives a return call to set up an appointment.
- Refusal to make or provide information about a lease  
For example: A landlord will not provide details about the housing to callers who have a foreign accent, but will release details to people who speak English without an accent.
- Changing terms and conditions of a lease  
For example: Families with children must pay an extra security deposit or people in wheelchairs must change the carpet upon move-out.
- Advertisements that state a preference or limitation based on personal traits protected under law  
For example: "Perfect for couples without children" or "English-speakers only, please."
- Threats, intimidation, coercion or retaliation  
For example: A landlord refuses to renew a lease after a person with a disability requests a reasonable accommodation.
- Sexual harassment  
For example: The landlord's agent makes repeated offensive comments based on gender, or the landlord offers to exchange a service, benefit, or discount at the property in return for sexual favors.
- Refusal to show an apartment or steering potential tenants to other locations  
For example: A real estate agent might say to a person of color, "Perhaps you would be more comfortable in another neighborhood" and the offered neighborhood has more people of color living in it.
- Enforcing discriminatory policies  
For example: The manager states: "We only allow one person per bedroom" or "We do not rent to unmarried couples."
- Enforcing neutral policies that have a large negative impact on people with certain personal traits  
For example: In some areas of the country, a policy that screens out applicants from renting because of an arrest record could affect African-American and Latino men much more negatively than Caucasian men or women. However, there must be a less discriminatory way of screening applicants that would help landlords find tenants who are not likely to commit crime on the property.

If you are denied an apartment or house or experienced some other type of discrimination because of any of these reasons, you have several options.

- If you live in Boone, Lake, McHenry, Peoria, Tazewell, or Winnebago Counties, you can call Prairie State Legal Services' Fair Housing Project at 855/FHP-PSLS (855/347-7757). The Fair Housing Project may be able to negotiate with a landlord, investigate possible housing discrimination through a process called "testing," file a complaint for you, or represent you in court or in an agency proceeding after making a complaint. For more information, visit [www.pslegal.org](http://www.pslegal.org).
- You may contact government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels to make a complaint.
  - On the federal level, call the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development toll-free at 800/669-9777. HUD may investigate fair housing complaints or refer them to the Illinois Department of Human Rights for investigation.
  - At the state level, call the Illinois Department of Human Rights at 800/662-3942 or 312/814-6229.
  - To determine if there is a human rights or fair housing commission at the local level, contact city hall or the county government in your area.



## **Basics of Landlord Tenant Relationship**

A good relationship between you and your landlord is important. To help in this regard, BE SURE THAT YOU....

1. Get all agreements and promises in writing.
2. Do not pay any money unless you know exactly what it is for.
3. Are able to afford the rent and want to live there. If you are not sure that you want the place, do not put down a deposit unless you are guaranteed IN WRITING that it is refundable.
4. Get a receipt for all money paid.
5. Know and trust the people you will be living with.
6. Know the landlord's business and home phone numbers and business address.
7. Know the manager of your building and the manager's business and home phone numbers and business address.

### **Get it in Writing**

When you make an agreement with your landlord, roommate, or any individual, a general rule is to always get it in writing. This may seem like advice that is only going to make your life more difficult, but oral agreements are often confused or forgotten entirely and have little weight in court because neither person can prove exactly what was said.

You may want to add things to your lease before you sign it. If your landlord makes oral promises about repairs, utilities, etc., you will want to get these promises in writing. Simply because a lease is on a printed form does not mean you cannot add any provisions or terms that you or your landlord agree upon. Write any additional agreements on both your copy and the landlord's copy. Both of you should initial the additions on both copies. If there is not room on the lease form, write the additional agreement on two pieces of paper, date them, and both of you should initial each copy. Keep your copy of these additional pages with your lease.

You do not need to use legal terms or big words. All that is necessary is that an average person could understand the agreement without explanation. If your landlord refuses to initial or sign provisions added to your lease, you have good reason to doubt that he or she will honor the agreement later. Landlords are business people and understand that initialing or signing an agreement will make it binding. If they intend to honor the agreement, they should not hesitate to sign it.

Once you move in, if you develop problems requiring the need for changes or repairs, make a request to your landlord in writing. A polite note, dated and signed, requesting the repairs needed is all that is required. Keep track of the dates of letters sent and the repairs requested so that you can refer to them later if needed. It is a good idea to make a copy for yourself of every letter you send. If there is any delay in getting work done, do not accept oral promises, but ask that the landlord provide you with a letter stating what work will be done and when. The letter should be signed by the landlord and dated. If your landlord does not want to send a letter, write a note from the landlord to yourself stating, for example: "I will repair (e.g., the broken door) in the apartment located at (address) as requested by (tenant) on (date)." Ask the landlord to sign and date this note. If he or she will not sign it, then you have reason to doubt that he or she will honor the promise. See the section of this handbook, *What to Do If the Landlord Does Not Make the Repairs*, on page 23. If you have communicated with your

landlord about repairs to your residence through text messages, be sure to screen shot the messages, and save them by emailing yourself or printing all your messages. These messages to and from the landlord can be used later in court to show knowledge of the issues and an agreement or refusal to make repairs.

This same procedure is often necessary between two unrelated tenants living together (roommates, significant others, etc.). Tenants should write out their agreements about how they will share rent, food, utility and any other costs; they should date and sign the agreements.

IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET AND KEEP YOUR OWN COPIES OF THE LEASE AND ALL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR LANDLORD. ALSO, IF YOU PAY CASH FOR RENT, FOR A DEPOSIT OR FOR ANYTHING ELSE, GET A RECEIPT AND KEEP IT. WITHOUT A RECEIPT, YOU CANNOT PROVE THAT YOU ACTUALLY MADE THE PAYMENT. WRITE YOUR OWN RECEIPT (INCLUDING NAME, ADDRESS, REASON FOR PAYMENT AND AMOUNT) IF THE LANDLORD DOES NOT PROVIDE ONE, AND ASK HIM OR HER TO SIGN IT.

#### **Making a Deposit on a Rental Unit**

Some people pay a deposit before signing a lease or moving in, so that the landlord will hold the apartment for them. If you decide to rent somewhere else, you may have problems getting your money back. As long as the landlord is still willing to rent to you, he or she may not be obligated to return your deposit to you. If you are not sure that you want a particular housing unit, do not make any payment unless you are willing to give up that money if you change your mind. If you give the landlord any money, get a receipt. If you have an agreement that the money will be returned if you decide not to rent, be sure the agreement is in writing. An agreement to return a deposit to you can be written on the receipt and initialed and dated by both you and the landlord. For example: "(Landlord) agrees to return to (tenant) the amount of (\$) given as deposit on (address) if (tenant) decides not to rent." Signed and dated.

## Know Your Landlord

When you are renting an apartment, both you and your landlord have certain responsibilities. Therefore, it is important to know the name, address and phone number of your landlord. If the person you are dealing with is a manager, make sure you know his/her name, address and phone number and find out who owns the property. Make sure you know where to pay your rent and where to contact your landlord for repairs or problems.

You may also want to check to be sure the property you are planning to rent is not in foreclosure. The section of this handbook called *What Happens When Your Landlord is in Foreclosure*, on page 72 has more information about this.

If you wish to find additional information about your landlord, here are some suggestions:

1. Phone books and directory assistance have phone numbers and/or addresses; you might also be able to find the information online.
2. If your landlord has ever sued anyone, his or her name and address will be recorded in the plaintiff's index at the Circuit Court Clerk's Office. You can also check [www.judici.com](http://www.judici.com) or your circuit clerk's website to see if court records are available online for your county of residence.
3. The County Recorder's Office holds information about deeds and mortgages.
4. The Tax Assessor's Office holds the records that give the value of properties. It also records the amount of property taxes and who pays those taxes. If the landlord is behind in property taxes, this could be a sign that he or she will also not have the money to take good care of the property.

Making sure you can reach your landlord can make your life much easier. If problems do arise, knowing where to reach your landlord may be essential.



## **The Written Lease**

A rental agreement is often in the form of a written lease between the lessor (the landlord) and the lessee (the tenant). As a general rule, it is best to get a written agreement when you rent because you are guaranteed you can rent the place for a set period of time. You do not have to worry about rent increases during the lease, and the tenant's and landlord's responsibilities are stated more specifically than in an oral agreement. Again, if the landlord made promises to you when he or she rented the apartment, for example that he or she would make certain repairs before you moved in, it will be very difficult to enforce those promises if they are not written in as part of the lease.

### **Read Your Lease and Talk with your Landlord about Making Changes if Needed**

Make sure you read your lease carefully so you understand what you are agreeing to. If the landlord is rushing you or if there are things that you do not understand, do not sign the lease. Take the lease to someone who can help you, and go through it slowly. Make sure you understand everything in the lease. Then, if you are satisfied, sign the lease and return it to the landlord for his or her signature.

Remember – if you are signing a 12-month lease, you are agreeing to pay the monthly rent for 12 months. Make sure that you know what you are getting for this large amount of money. If you find some things in the lease that you do not like or that are different from what your landlord said, try to have them changed. You and the landlord can remove items from the lease by drawing a dark line through them and then both you and your landlord initialing the changes. The lease will replace any oral agreements if they were different from what the lease says. Do not change the lease on your own because changes made by just one person are not part of the contract. If the landlord does not agree to changes that you believe are very important, you should think twice about signing the lease.

### **What to Look for in a Lease**

As mentioned earlier, be sure to read your lease before you sign it. If there is something which you do not understand, take the lease to someone who can explain it to you before you sign it. The following essential information should be included in your lease.

1. The amount of rent, who is responsible for payment of the rent, and when and where the rent is due.
2. The address of the rental property and any storage, parking or other property related items.
3. Information on who is responsible to provide and pay for utilities.
4. The lease should state a specific term (length of time) for the agreement, for example one year.
5. The lease should not contain any blanks.
6. Make sure the lease agrees with any oral promises the landlord has made to you, such as pet agreements or agreements to make repairs. If any oral promises are not in the written lease, they will not be binding.
7. Make sure you understand any additional costs or fees you may have to pay in the event of a breach, or violation, of the terms of the lease. For example, the lease may state you have to pay an additional fee if you do not pay your rent on time or that you have to pay for the landlord's attorney's fees and court costs if an eviction action is filed against you.
8. Make sure you understand what each clause of the lease means before you sign it.

## **The Oral Lease**

### **An Oral Lease is a Lease**

If you pay rent, but have not signed a written lease, then you and your landlord have an oral lease agreement. This is a binding contract. Generally, these agreements are from month-to-month, although they may be from week-to-week or for any period of time as long as it is less than a year. The rental period begins on the day your rent is due and renews itself automatically. This oral lease will run until it is properly terminated.

There is one advantage with an oral lease agreement – you are not bound for more than one rental period. However, the disadvantages of not having a written agreement should cause you to be uneasy about having an oral lease. Your rent may be increased to any amount at any time with very little warning. Also, you can be evicted at any time with very little warning. Problems may also arise between you and your landlord over unwritten “rules and regulations” that you know nothing about, or because you disagree about the specifics of the lease, such as who is responsible for paying for utilities.

The advantage of an oral lease is that you are not bound to pay rent for the property for a full year as you are with a typical written lease. You have the right to end the lease on one rental period’s notice. Your landlord has the same right. There is more information on ending an oral lease in the section of this handbook titled *Ending an Oral Lease*, on page 64.

### **Rent Increases under an Oral Lease**

Rent increases on an oral lease are much the same as a notice to move; just as the landlord can end the lease on one rental period’s notice, he or she can raise the rent on the same short notice. See *Ending an Oral Lease*, on page 64. Your landlord should not raise the rent without first giving you a full rental period’s notice of the increase in writing. With an oral lease, if the landlord gives you proper notice that the rent is increasing, the landlord does not need your agreement. If you do not want to pay the higher rent, you can move instead of paying the increase in rent; however you still must give your landlord proper notice of your intent to move. If you have a written lease, your rent cannot be increased until the end of the lease. This is another reason that you may want to avoid an oral lease.

## **Issues that Can Come Up When You Share an Apartment**

### **Everyone Who Signs the Lease Owes the Rent**

Your lease is a contract between you and your landlord. The person who signs the lease as a tenant is required to pay the rent. Problems may arise where two or more people have rented an apartment together and have agreed among themselves to pay their fair share of the monthly rent. Later, one of the tenants moves out and stops paying rent. The tenant(s) who remains in the apartment is legally required to pay the full amount of the rent to the landlord even though that was not the deal that was made between the roommates. Under Illinois law, each tenant who signed the lease is responsible for the full amount of the rent due. This means that, in the event of a dispute, the landlord could sue you, your roommate or both of you, no matter who failed to pay his or her share of the rent. The tenant who remains would be the person called to court, possibly evicted, and left owing all the rent by court order.

There are two ways to avoid this problem. One way is to ask your landlord to include a clause in your lease which requires each tenant to pay only her/his part of the total rent (pro-rated) and releases each tenant from the liability for the other tenants' payment. For example, the following clause could serve this purpose: "Landlord and tenants hereby agree that each of the undersigned tenants is not jointly and severally liable for the failure of any of the other undersigned tenants to perform any of their obligations under the lease. Further, in the event of legal action by the landlord to recover rent due under this lease, the liability of any individual tenant will be limited to (the percentage you agree to pay) of the total amount of rent due under the lease. The preceding sentence shall not be construed to impose liability upon any individual tenant where such liability has been relieved under the first sentence of this clause." The landlord may not be willing to agree to this type of clause; from the landlord's point of view, this clause could make it harder for the landlord to collect the rent for the property, and there is no real advantage to the landlord to agreeing unless you agree to offer something in return, such as a higher security deposit.

The other way is to be very careful in choosing a roommate. If there is a chance he or she may move out and leave you paying all the rent, you should think twice.

### **Other Roommate Considerations**

Be careful about the person with whom you decide to live. Generally, if two or more people move in together or sign a lease together, all of them are liable for the terms in the rental agreement. This means that if your roommate does not pay her/his half of the rent one month, the landlord can sue either you, your roommate or both of you for the total rent. It is the landlord's choice. If your roommate disappears without paying the rent and you are the only one the landlord can find, then you are the one he or she will sue for the total rent.

The same is true with other parts of the rental agreement. If you and your roommate agreed with the landlord there would be no pets and your roommate gets a dog, the landlord may evict both of you for breaking the lease, even though it is not your dog.

Once again, it is good to get it in writing, even between roommates. Write down who is to pay what and have all the roommates sign and date the agreement. This may not guarantee good roommates, but it will guarantee some evidence of an agreement if you have to sue a roommate for his or her share of the rent or bills.



## Moving In

Once you know where you are going to be living, there are a few things you should do immediately to make your apartment your home.

1. Get your landlord's name, address and telephone number. Also, get the name, address and telephone number of the manager of the property if it is a different person than the landlord. More sure you get the name and telephone number of a person to contact in case of emergencies if it is a different person than the landlord or manager.
2. If you have not already done so, ask your landlord which utility bills you are responsible to pay. This could include electricity, gas, water, sewer, garbage collection and telephone. Usually if you must pay for them, then you are responsible for having them turned on. Make arrangements before you move in to have these turned on and have the meters read. By planning ahead, service can be scheduled the day you move in.
3. Put the names of everyone living in the apartment on the mailbox as soon as possible. The post office may not deliver mail to you until this is done, even if the mail is properly addressed. As a safety measure, you should list only the first initial and last name of each resident.
4. Before you unpack anything, it is a good idea to check for roaches, bedbugs, ants, or signs of rodents. If the lease says your landlord is responsible for spraying for bugs and rodents, make sure your apartment has been sprayed recently. If it has not been sprayed, ask the landlord to do it. If he or she agrees to do it, get the agreement in writing. If your landlord refused to spray, find out if the law in your area says he or she is responsible for doing it. See the section of this handbook titled *Housing Code/Apartment Search Checklist*, on page 30. If the landlord is refusing to spray even though the lease or housing code says the landlord is responsible, this is a sign that there may be other problems ahead.
5. Make a list of the conditions in your apartment. At the end of this handbook, on page 77, is a form for listing the conditions: Moving In/Moving Out Checklist. It is a good idea to take pictures of the unit when you move in and date the pictures. Keep the list and the pictures in a safe place; this place might be with a close friend or family member. An additional way to make sure you have access to the photos if you need them is to email them to yourself in case your phone is lost or destroyed. This list and the photos are particularly important if you are concerned about the landlord keeping your security deposit or accusing you of causing damage to the apartment. Also, the building may be sold to a new landlord who would not know about pre-existing damage and may blame you.
6. Find out if your landlord has insurance to cover loss or damage to your personal belongings due to theft, fire, vandalism, smoke, natural disaster, etc. If not (which is generally the case) you may want to check into the possibility of renter's insurance. In fact, some leases require the tenant to get renters' insurance, so be sure to read your lease carefully. Usually, these policies cover loss or damage to all of your personal belongings for a reasonable sum. Renter's insurance does not include insurance for the apartment itself. Various policies cover different things, so ask an insurance agent about the different types of coverage. Check around because rates do vary.
7. Check the security of the apartment. This is explained in the section titled *Security and Safety* on page 37.

8. You may want to have your apartment inspected by the housing code enforcement department before you move in. See the section titled *Housing Code/Apartment Search Checklist* on page 30.

## **What to Do When Your House or Apartment Needs Repair**

### **Your Options When Your House or Apartment Needs Repair:**

There are a number of steps you can take if your rented house or apartment needs repair. This is a summary of the steps you can take; there is more specific information about these steps on the next pages of this handbook.

1. Continue to pay your rent even if the problems with the condition in the house or apartment are serious. If you do not pay your rent, you could be evicted, even if the landlord fails to make the repairs.
2. Start by telling the landlord in writing about the problem and asking the landlord to make the repairs. Keep a copy of the note or letter you give to the landlord.
3. If the problems are serious and the landlord does not act quickly to make the repairs, you can try to talk to the landlord about lowering your rent. Get any agreement to lower rent in writing.
4. Make the repairs yourself (but only if you are qualified to do the repairs) or hire a licensed contractor to make the repairs. Ask the landlord in writing to repay you for the costs of the repair.
5. If you cover the cost of the repairs, you still need to pay your rent while you try to get the landlord to reimburse you. In most situations, Illinois law does not allow a tenant to deduct the cost of repairs from rent. If you are considering deducting repair costs from your rent, be sure your situation is one of those in which Illinois law or a local ordinance lets you do this, and follow the rules exactly.
6. Call the local government office which is responsible for health or building code violations. An inspector will come to the property and may order the landlord to make repairs. Your landlord is not allowed to evict you in retaliation for calling a government office about a legitimate code violation, but you need to pay your rent to be protected by this rule.
7. If the landlord still does not make the repairs and the conditions are very bad, you can talk with your landlord about ending the lease early. If you do make an agreement to end the lease, be sure to read the information on page 63 of this handbook about ending a lease early.
8. Take photos of the problem conditions so that you will have a record.
9. You may be able to file a lawsuit to ask the judge to order the landlord to make the repairs. This kind of lawsuit is usually complicated; talk to a lawyer if you are considering this option.
10. You can be evicted for not paying your rent, no matter how bad the conditions are in the house or apartment. In some cases a judge might say you do not owe the full rent and not evict you, but you should never count on this. You are in a better position to get the repairs made if you pay your rent and take the steps here to get your landlord to make the repairs.

## Getting Repairs Done – Start by Notifying Your Landlord

Whenever you have a problem with your apartment or house, you should report it to your landlord. This is why it is so important that you have his or her phone number and address. Your landlord cannot be expected to know all the problems that arise once you move in, so it is your responsibility to inform him or her of any problems. Hopefully, once the landlord is made aware of the problem, he or she will take care of the problem quickly. If you make any oral requests for repair, be sure to keep a record of the date and time you made the request.

Generally, it is a good idea to report all problems in writing and keep a copy of the letter. That way, your landlord is less likely to forget your request and hopefully will take you more seriously. Also, in some instances, you may have to prove later when you reported a problem. (For example, a broken furnace which causes a lack of heat and makes pipes freeze and burst could be considered your fault if you did not report the broken furnace to the landlord within a reasonable time.)

If you want immediate action, it is best to call your landlord or talk to him or her in person and tell him or her exactly what is wrong. Then, follow up the call with a polite letter that is signed and dated. Keep a copy of the letter for your records.

Your landlord should make repairs in a reasonable amount of time. In deciding what a reasonable amount of time is, try to be fair. A broken furnace in the middle of winter or a toilet that does not flush should receive immediate attention. A broken garbage disposal or loose floor tiles are not as important, especially if other tenants are having more serious problems.

If the landlord is just taking too long to make needed repairs, be persistent so that your landlord would rather make the repair than listen to you. In some cases, neither politeness nor persistence will get the repairs done. You will then have to contact an attorney or the government agency in your area that deals with building conditions, or you may be able to take one of the other steps discussed below. See the sections titled *What to Do If the Landlord Does Not Make the Repairs* on page 23 and *Housing Code Violations* on page 28.

Make sure that you have been firm with your landlord and asked for the repairs in writing more than once before contacting an attorney or agency. Be sure to take photographs of the damage for your records.

Remember that you have an obligation to keep the property in good condition. If you caused the problem needing repair, the landlord is probably not going to be responsible for paying for the repair. On the other hand, the landlord probably *does* have the right to have the repair made and then send you the bill.

## What to Do If the Landlord Does Not Make the Repairs

If you have made requests for repairs and have been persistent and your landlord still refuses or fails to make repairs, there are several things that you can do. They are discussed in more detail below and include:

1. Entering into a rent settlement agreement with the landlord to reduce the rent.
2. Making the repairs and deducting the cost of repair from your rent.
3. Reporting housing code violations to local housing officials.
4. Withholding rent (not recommended).



## **Agreements or Settlements with the Landlord to Reduce the Rent**

It may be possible to make an agreement with your landlord to return some of the rent you have paid, or to reduce the rent you owe in the future if there are problems that make the premises or any part of it inconvenient or otherwise not useful. Remember you are paying rent for a livable unit with certain services. If you are not getting a livable unit, you are not getting what the landlord promised and some sort of adjustment or payment may only be fair.

For example, if the roof leaks consistently, and in several places, and the landlord cannot or will not fix it, you are not getting the livable unit you are paying for. In cases such as this, you are entitled to a reduction in your rent or some payment for the inconvenience. Suggest some type of arrangement to your landlord. If your landlord refuses, it may be possible to sue him to get a reduction or refund. See an attorney.

If your landlord does agree to a reduction or refund, make sure you get it in writing. Have the landlord sign and date a written statement clearly explaining that you may deduct a certain stated amount of dollars from your next rent payments. If you do not get such a written statement, you may find yourself facing an eviction for non-payment of rent because your landlord has changed his or her mind about the refund or rent reduction.

## **Repair and Deduct – Hiring a Repairperson and Deducting the Cost from Your Rent**

Many people think that if their landlord refuses to make repairs, they can make the repairs themselves and deduct the cost of those repairs from the rent. This is a tricky area of the law, and you will want to be very careful if you decide to take this route. In Illinois, there is a law allowing tenants to repair and deduct under some circumstances. If you decide to repair and deduct in a situation not covered by the law, you risk being faced with an eviction for non-payment of rent.

### ***The Residential Tenants' Right to Repair Act***

The Illinois Residential Tenants' Right to Repair Act allows you to hire a licensed tradesman or supplier to make the repair and pay the bill yourself, and then deduct the cost of repair from your rent. However, this law only applies under certain circumstances and provides a right only for certain repairs. Also, you must take special steps (described below) to comply with the Act. Read the rest of this section to find out if and how you can take advantage of this law. Again, if you decide to repair and deduct in a situation not covered by the law, you risk being faced with an eviction for non-payment of rent.

### ***What types of repairs are covered under the Right to Repair Act?***

The Act only applies to repairs that are required by the lease, or by law, administrative rule or local ordinance or regulation. You cannot deduct the cost of repair from your rent if you caused the damages by a deliberate or negligent act or by a failure to do something you were supposed to do. Also, you cannot deduct the cost of repair from rent where your family members or other persons you allowed to be in your apartment caused the damages.

### ***Are all types of rental housing covered under the Right to Repair Act?***

No. The Act does NOT apply to:

1. Public housing;
2. Condominiums;
3. Residential cooperative housing;
4. Commercial tenants;
5. Residences with six units or less, if the owner lives on the property; or
6. Mobile homes located in a mobile home park.

If your housing falls into one of the categories listed above, then you cannot deduct the cost of repairs from your rent under the Right to Repair Act. If your situation is not covered by the Act, then you may still be able to repair and deduct in some situations. See the section titled *What if the Right to Repair Act does not apply to me?* on page 26.

***Is there a limit to the amount that can be spent on any particular repair under the Act?***

Yes. The amount you can deduct depends on your monthly rent:

1. If your rent is \$1,000 or more – you can take up to \$500 out of your rent for a covered repair.
2. If your rent is \$999 or less – you can take up to half of your rent for a covered repair.
3. Also, the amount you deduct cannot be more than the reasonable price that is usually charged for the repair.

***Do I have to notify my landlord before I hire someone to make the repair?***

Yes. You must tell the landlord in writing that you are planning to have the repair made at the landlord's expense. You must send the letter through registered or certified mail to the landlord's address shown on the lease, but if there is no address listed, you must send it to the most recent address you have for the landlord.

***After I notify my landlord, can I then have a tradesman or supplier make the repair?***

After notifying the landlord in writing, you must wait 14 days to allow the landlord to make the repair. If the landlord fails to make the repair within 14 days, then you may have your tradesman or supplier make the repair. If there are emergency conditions that require the repair to be made sooner, the repair can be made immediately. Emergencies include any conditions that will cause irreparable harm to the apartment if not immediately repaired or any condition that poses an immediate threat to you or to your household members' health or safety. Remember: you may not make the repair yourself.

***Do I have to follow any special rules for making the repair?***

- The repair must be made in a workmanlike manner;
- It must be made according to the appropriate law, administrative rule, or local ordinance or regulation;
- It must be completed by a tradesman or supplier who holds a valid license or certificate as required by State or municipal law;
- The tradesman or supplier must be insured to cover any bodily harm or property damage they cause;
- The tradesman or supplier cannot be related to you.

***Do I have to give my landlord anything after the repair has been made?***

You must give your landlord a paid bill from the tradesman or supplier and the tradesman or supplier's name, address, and telephone number before you may deduct the amount from your rent. This means that if you do not have the money to pay for the repair, you will not be able to use this repair and deduct option.

***Can my landlord evict me for not paying rent if I repair and deduct?***

No, your landlord should not be able to evict you. **But:** you need to make sure you follow all of the rules explained here. If you fail to do any part of the repairs and deductions properly, then your landlord may have the right to evict you. If you receive an eviction notice, contact a lawyer immediately.

***What if the Right to Repair Act doesn't apply to me?***

If the Act doesn't apply to you, then you may still have the right to make repairs and deduct the cost from your rent if there is a local ordinance permitting you to do so. You should check your local ordinance to find out your rights as a tenant. If you are not protected by the Right to Repair Act or by a local ordinance, then to assure that you will not be evicted for non-payment of rent, you should pay your full rent even if your landlord hasn't made repairs.

However, under certain circumstances, even where there is no applicable law or ordinance, some judges will not evict a tenant who makes repairs and deducts the cost from rent. It depends on the seriousness of the problem or whether a lease requires the landlord to repair and the landlord does not make repairs. Every judge is different, so if you decide to make a repair and deduct the cost from your rent, you are taking a big risk. Problems are usually considered serious when they involve essentials, such as heat, electricity, plumbing, water or security. You should have the premises inspected in order to help determine if the violations are serious. If they are serious and violate the local housing code, the inspector will request that the landlord make the repairs, so you may not need to use the repair and deduct option. If the problem does not violate the housing code or other laws, you probably should not repair and deduct, unless your lease permits it.

If you do decide to do a repair and deduct that is not allowed under the Right to Repair Act, you should be sure to notify the landlord in writing and give him or her a chance to make the repair first. Keep a copy of your letter. Make copies of all receipts to show what you actually spent on the repairs; give the landlord copies of the receipts and keep the originals in a safe place.



## **Rent Withholding – Refusing to Pay Rent (Not Recommended)**

Many times people feel that if their landlord refuses to make repairs or if the place they live in is “bad enough,” they do not have to pay rent. Oftentimes, tenants are misinformed by other people who tell them that this is true. *No matter who tells you that you do not have to pay rent, that person may be wrong. Under Illinois law, you have no right to withhold or refuse to pay rent no matter how “bad” the place is.* There may be a local ordinance that allows you to withhold rent. Check with an attorney in your area to see if such an ordinance applies to you. If there is no applicable ordinance and serious repairs are needed in your home but the landlord has refused your requests to make repairs, then you must decide whether withholding your rent is worth taking a chance that the landlord will attempt to evict you for not paying the rent.

### ***Can I be evicted for withholding rent?***

Yes! If you decide to withhold rent, the landlord may try to evict you, but a judge would have to make that decision. A judge might not evict you for withholding rent if you can prove that the housing code violations are bad, but you have no legal guarantee that the judge will rule in your favor. If the landlord wants to evict you for withholding rent, before taking you to court the landlord is required to send you a notice demanding that you pay rent within the five days; if you do pay within the five days, your landlord cannot evict you.

### ***What should I do if I decide to withhold rent?***

1. Write the landlord a letter requesting that the landlord make repairs and inform him or her that you will withhold rent if he or she does not make repairs.
2. Send this letter certified mail with return receipt or hand deliver it to the landlord in front of a witness.
3. Keep a copy for your records.
4. Hold onto the rent money and do not spend it.

## **Warranty of Habitability Rights**

In all agreements to rent real property, whether oral or written, the Illinois courts will imply a promise from the landlord to the tenant that the premises will be kept in a livable condition. This promise is called the “warranty of habitability”; it is part of oral leases, and it is part of written leases even if it is not spelled out. Generally, “livable condition” means that the unit you are renting should be free from housing code violations. If you are living in an area that does not have a housing or building code, the unit you are renting should at least have heat, hot and cold water, no leaks in the roof, and a solid structure; be free from bugs, rats and mice; and be safe.

If there are conditions or housing code violations that negatively affect living in the premises, you may be able to break your lease, sue your landlord for damages, or sue your landlord to make repairs. If you feel your landlord has violated his or her promise to provide you with a livable dwelling and you are unable to correct the problems, see an attorney before you break your lease.

## Housing Code Violations

### *What are housing codes?*

Housing codes set minimum housing standards that all residential property in a village, city, or county must meet. These standards are adopted by villages, cities, and counties to ensure safe and sanitary housing for their residents. Generally, major things such as heat, water and sewer facilities, electricity, structural defects, bugs, mice, rats, etc. are covered by housing codes. You can use the “Housing Code Checklist” at the end of this section to determine if you might have code violations.

If you live in a village or rural area, there may not be a housing code unless the county has adopted one. To find out whether your city, village or county has adopted a housing code, you will need to contact city, village, or county staff members. Some cities, villages and counties have put their housing code information onto their websites; visiting the website is another way for you to check. Housing codes vary from area to area. It may be possible for you to determine whether there are any existing housing code violations in a dwelling you are considering renting by contacting your city or village hall or the city’s housing code enforcement department. Note that these departments have different official names in different cities and counties. In this handbook, we will call them housing code enforcement departments.

### *Acting on possible housing code violations*

If you are fairly sure that there are violations, follow these steps to address the problems. If the problems are of a serious nature and threaten your health, safety or welfare, follow the directions in the next section of the handbook, *Acting on Serious Housing Code Problems*, below.

1. Keep paying your rent. As was explained in an earlier section, under Illinois law you have no right to withhold or refuse to pay rent no matter how “bad” the place is, unless your situation falls within the Illinois Right to Repair Act or a local ordinance that allows you to withhold rent. Check with an attorney in your area to see if such an ordinance applies to you.
2. Check your lease to see if you are responsible for fixing some of the problems you identified. Usually, the tenant is responsible for a minimum of good housekeeping. In most cases, your landlord is responsible for correcting housing code violations. If you have any doubts, seek help.
3. Explain the problem to the landlord. The landlord may not even know of the problem if you do not notify him or her. If the problem is likely to cause further damage to the property, it is important that you notify the landlord immediately. For example, a serious leak in the roof or plumbing can create damage to walls or ceilings. As always, put in writing what you told the landlord. Give the landlord a copy and keep a copy for yourself.
4. If the problem is not fixed within a reasonable time, remind the landlord again. If he or she still does not respond, contact the housing code enforcement department, explain the problem, and request an inspection. Be sure to call them before you have missed a rent payment or damaged the premises.

The landlord cannot evict you for requesting a housing inspection as long as violations exist. State laws prohibit a landlord from evicting a tenant because the tenant called the housing code enforcement department. The landlord may still evict the tenant for not paying rent or for breaking the lease, but he or she may not evict the tenant solely for calling in the authorities.

### ***Acting on serious housing code problems***

If the violation is a major one and presents serious danger to your health, safety and welfare, you should contact the housing officials of your municipality or county immediately. A phone call is enough to start the process. Avoid general statements such as "the place is a mess." Be exact. If the roof leaks, say it. If the toilet does not flush, say it. Be specific about which rooms need to be fixed.

Usually within a day or two after receiving your complaint, the housing code enforcement department will make an inspection. If a genuine emergency exists, call and explain the situation. The code enforcement officer may do an inspection the same day you make your complaint. Once your rental unit has been inspected, it is not likely the problem will be solved immediately. Be sure to ask for a copy of the inspection report for your records.

### ***What happens after I report a housing code violation?***

Housing code enforcement departments answer tenants' complaints and inspect all residential property within the city or county to make sure it is safe and healthy. Call them when you have problems with your apartment or house and the landlord has refused your request for repairs. The following are the typical steps that will be taken after you contact the housing code enforcement department.

1. An inspector from the housing code enforcement department will usually respond to your complaint within a few days.
2. If the inspector finds a violation of the housing code, they will notify the landlord by letter listing all the violations they have found. The letter will set a time limit for the landlord to make repairs. The length of the time limit will vary according to the problem.
3. The department will usually follow up and check to make sure everything is fixed. If the repairs do not occur, you may want to contact the inspector to ask about the status of your complaint.
4. If the landlord fails to make repairs after this follow-up, the city or county may sue the landlord, fine him or her, or prohibit the re-renting of the premises, depending on the seriousness of the repairs needed.

**Note:** If the violations of the housing code are serious, the building inspector may condemn the apartment for occupancy and you may have to move; however generally the inspector will give the residents time to vacate (for example, 30 days).



## **Housing Code/Apartment Search Checklist:**

The following checklist is a general overview of many of the most common issues that are addressed by housing codes. You should use this list when looking at an apartment or house you are about to rent; if there are serious problems, you should think about looking for a different place to rent. You also can use the list to think about problems in the apartment you are living in to figure out whether there might be housing code violations. Read through the list and check each statement that is true. Ideally you will be able to check off each item. If there are items that you cannot check off, they may represent a housing code violation. If you have any questions, contact your city or county's housing code enforcement department.

### *Exterior and Common Areas:*

- ☐ The hallways and/or stairways have natural or electric light at all times.
- ☐ The roof does not leak.
- ☐ The outside areas are free of standing water and kept clean.
- ☐ There are hand railings where there are three steps or more.
- ☐ The porches are safe.
- ☐ There are no holes, cracks, or loose or rotting boards in the exterior walls or foundation.
- ☐ There are sufficient garbage cans with lids for the outside.

### *Windows and Doors:*

- ☐ Every room has at least one window or skylight that can be opened, except for the bathroom, laundry, furnace, pantry, kitchenette, or utility room.
- ☐ The locks on all exterior doors work properly and will insure your safety.
- ☐ There are two or more safe ways to get out of the house or apartment.
- ☐ Wind or rain does not enter the house or apartment through the doors or windows.
- ☐ There are no broken windows.
- ☐ All the windows operate properly.
- ☐ There are screens on all the windows.

### *Bathroom and Kitchen:*

- ☐ The kitchen has cabinets and shelves.
- ☐ The drains, toilets, sinks and other plumbing fixtures work well.
- ☐ If the bathroom has no window or skylight, there is a fan which vents to the outside that works properly.
- ☐ The bathroom and kitchen floors resist water and are easy to keep clean and sanitary.
- ☐ The stove and refrigerator are safe and in good repair.

\_\_\_ All of the sinks, bathtubs and showers are supplied with hot and cold running water (hot water should be at least 120 degrees F. at any time needed).

*Bedrooms:*

\_\_\_ You can get to the bathroom or other bedrooms without going through someone else's bedroom.

*Electric, Gas and Water:*

\_\_\_ If the water heater is gas burning, it is vented to the outside. (It is not in your bathroom or bedroom.)

\_\_\_ All electrical outlets, switches and light fixtures operate properly.

\_\_\_ There are no pipes that leak.

\_\_\_ The water is safe to drink and does not contain lead. See the note below on how to find out about the quality of the water.

*General:*

\_\_\_ The dwelling is always maintained at a minimum temperature to ensure health and safety.

\_\_\_ The heating system works when the outside temperature is below 60 degrees F.

\_\_\_ There are no signs of infestation of insects or rodents in the dwelling. See the note below on how to tell if there might be insects or rodents.

\_\_\_ There are no poisonous or toxic paint or materials used on the walls and ceilings.

\_\_\_ The premises are free from debris and garbage that might breed pests.

\_\_\_ The basement does not flood.

\_\_\_ None of the walls or ceilings leak.

*Tenant-Related or Housekeeping Problems:*

\_\_\_ The property is sanitary and free from garbage and rubbish. (Some people feel that cleanliness is just a matter of lifestyle. That is true within limits. You may have the right to live in a mess, but if it causes rodents and pests that hurt other people in the building, then you are infringing on others' rights.)

*Signs of infestation of insects or rodents:* How do you know if a house or apartment that you are thinking about renting may have insects, mice or rats? Signs of mice or rats can include droppings (feces), tooth or gnaw marks at baseboards or cabinets, and burrow holes. There is good information about the signs of mice or rats at this website from Cornell University:  
<http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/evictmice/inspect.asp>

Bed bugs have become a serious problem. If you move into a house or apartment that has bed bugs, they will spread to your mattresses and furniture. If you already have bed bugs in your furniture, you should not move that furniture in to a new apartment. There is good information about finding bed bugs at these websites:

<https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs>

<https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef636>

You also want to look for signs of cockroaches. Roaches generally are awake at night, so they might be hard to spot. If you see roach activity during the day, it means that the nests are so large that some roaches are being thrust out. German cockroaches also tend to emit a certain odor that, when concentrated due a large population, may give the area near the infestation an oily, musty, smell. Another sign is the presence of cockroach feces, which are best described as resembling coffee grounds. These droppings will typically be left behind on counter tops, under sinks or anywhere else the roaches are scavenging. Typically, you will also find dead roaches around the house if there is an infestation.

*Finding out about the quality of the water:* Water quality has been in the news in 2016 because of the lead which was found in the water in Flint, Michigan. You cannot see, smell or taste lead in water. The only way to know if it is there is to have it tested. Water tests can also show if there are bacteria or other problems with the water. It is a good idea to ask the landlord the source of the water, for example, is it well water or city water? Ask the landlord if the water has been tested recently and ask him or her to show you the results of the test. Some cities or counties offer free or inexpensive water testing. If you are concerned, you can ask the landlord to have the water tested or arrange for a test yourself. Here is information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about lead in drinking water:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>

## **Damage and Security Deposit**

### **Payment**

When you rent, you will probably be required to pay a security deposit with the first month's rent. **THE DEPOSIT IS NOT RENT.** If you have a written lease, it will generally state what your deposit will cover. Some leases state that the deposit is only for damages done to the unit if it is not left in a clean condition. Other leases may state that the deposit will be used for payments of rent or late payments of your utility bills.

If you do not have a written lease and there is no specific agreement regarding the damage deposit, it is likely that the deposit will be used for cleaning and repairs that exceed normal wear and tear. Any portion of the deposit not used for this should be returned to you after you move out, as long as you are paid up on rent. No matter whether you have a written lease or an oral lease, be sure to get a receipt for any deposit you pay, and keep the receipt in a safe place so that you will have it when you move out.

### **Problems with Deposits and How to Prevent Them**

Most problems with security deposits arise over damages to the apartment or house, or the cleanliness of the unit. Generally, when the tenant is moving out of the apartment, he or she should leave it in the same condition as it was when he or she moved in, with **NORMAL WEAR AND TEAR EXCEPTED**. Check your lease to see just what things you should do when you move out. For example, your lease may say you have to shampoo the rug, dry clean the drapes, clean the stove and refrigerator, or wash all floors.

If a problem does arise, there is often very little an attorney can do for you if you do not have proof of the condition of your apartment or house when you moved in and when you moved out. To ensure the return of your deposit, follow these tips:

1. Within 72 hours of when you first move in, make a written list of the damages in your house or apartment and note the general condition and cleanliness of the unit. Have both you and your landlord sign and date the list. If your landlord will not sign or cannot inspect the premises with you, have a reliable friend (third party) join you in the inspection and sign in place of the landlord. (The third party can be any adult other than someone you are living with and should not be a member of your immediate family.) If you are able, take pictures of the rooms, appliances, carpet, etc., before you move your property into the residence.
2. Use the *Move-In/Move-Out Checklist* at the back of this handbook on page 77. Check the condition of everything in your apartment or house -- walls, floors, ceilings, appliances, furniture, plumbing, electrical fixtures, the basic structure, etc. Also, look for scratches, bumps, nail holes, and the number of items in each room, such as the number of shelves in the refrigerator, broiler pan in the oven, etc. Once this is done, give one copy to your landlord and keep the other copy yourself. If your landlord does not sign the checklist, you may want to get your signature notarized to indicate the date the list was filled out. Make certain that you keep a copy for yourself.
3. As mentioned before, if there are any damages to any part of your apartment or house when you move in, take a picture and put the date on the back along with your signature. Also, have your landlord sign the picture. If you cannot take a picture, make sure that you follow the steps in numbers one and two above very carefully.



4. When you move out, leave your apartment or house on time, in a clean condition and in good repair. Try to check out with your landlord so you can make a final inspection together. If your landlord makes any final written notes about the condition of your apartment or house, have him or her make a copy of the notes, with his or her signature and date, for you. If this is not a standard procedure with your landlord, make your own inspection report using the checklist and take any photographs you may need. Keep the photos on your phone for at least three months, or longer if there is an issue over your deposit or alleged damage to the property. Email the photos to yourself so that you will have them if your phone is lost or stolen. Again, you and your landlord should sign and date copies of the move-out checklist or, if your landlord refuses, have a third party accompany you and have him or her sign and date the report.
5. Do not sign any move-out sheet that your landlord prepares unless you agree to all remarks and receive a dated copy of the paperwork at that time (so the landlord cannot make changes after you sign). If the landlord has noted repairs that need to be done, do not sign his paperwork unless you are willing to pay for possibly expensive cleaning and repairs. You are under no obligation to sign anything the landlord has prepared, but you could still be charged even if you don't sign.
6. Be sure to leave a forwarding address so that your landlord can refund your deposit. If you are uncomfortable giving the landlord your new address, provide the landlord with an address where you generally can receive mail.

## Refund of Your Deposit

The first step in getting your deposit back is to ask for it or, better yet, send your landlord a letter. Keep a copy of the letter for yourself. If the check is written for the wrong amount, do not cash the check. Doing this may be taken by the landlord (and a court) as accepting that amount. If you must cash the check, sign the back with "partial payment" and beware that this may not ensure you getting any more money back.

The law on security deposits in Illinois varies depending on the size of the building or complex where you rent. If you live in a building or complex with five or more units, the landlord is required to provide you with an itemized statement of the damage you allegedly caused to the premises within 30 days from the date you move out. This statement must include the estimated or actual cost for repairing or replacing each item on that statement, attaching paid receipts. If your landlord does not do this within 30 days of your moving out, he or she must return the entire deposit within 45 days of the move-out date. If your landlord does not send your deposit within 45 days of your move-out, has refused to supply the itemized statement, or has supplied such statement in bad faith, you can sue for double the security deposit, as well as for court costs and attorney's fees.

If you are unable to get your deposit back or if you received an amount less than you are entitled to, and you have been unsuccessful getting the rest – SUE. You can file a suit in small claims court without an attorney. See the section titled *Small Claims* on page 70 or, if you are eligible, seek help from Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. Some counties also have a small claims help desk at the courthouse; there is more information about small claims court at [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org).

You should be aware that your landlord may counter sue for more damages or for other money you owe. If you wait 45 days after you vacate the building, the building had five or more units, and the landlord did not give you the itemized statement of damages, you may be able to argue in court that it is beyond the time allowed by law to charge you anything against your deposit. Note that some local landlord-tenant ordinances, such as the ordinance in Evanston, require the landlord to return a security deposit more quickly than the deadlines set under state law. Be sure to check your local landlord-tenant ordinance in case it gives you more rights than state law gives you.

### Interest on Security Deposits

Under Illinois Law, your landlord must pay you interest on your security deposit if you rented in a building or complex that has 25 or more units and the landlord has held your deposit for six months or more. The landlord must pay this interest to you annually in cash or in the form of credit towards rent within 30 days after the end of each 12-month rental period, if the interest is at least \$5.00. The interest is determined by the rate paid by the largest commercial bank in the state, as measured by total assets, on minimum deposit passbook savings rates as of December 31st of the year before the lease began. Because interest rates have been very low for the past few years, the interest may not add up to a large amount of money. In fact, an interest rate of .005% on a deposit of \$750.00 is less than 4 cents per year. However, if interest rates go back up, the interest on security deposits could be more meaningful. The rates (by year) are as follows:

December 31	Interest Rate
2015	0.01%
2014	0.005%
2013	0.005%
2012	0.005%
2011	0.005%
2010	0.195%
2009	0.095%
2008	0.25%
2007	0.35%

Make sure that your landlord knows of the interest on security deposit law, if it applies to you, before you leave your apartment. Note: THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE LANDLORD PAY INTEREST DOES NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC HOUSING OR TO A RENTER WHO IS BEHIND IN RENT.

You have the right to sue a landlord who willfully fails or refuses to pay the required interest for an amount equal to the security deposit, together with court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.



Landlord requirements for paying interest may be different and the above rates may be higher if you live in a city that has an ordinance imposing higher rates, such as Chicago or Evanston.

## **Other Issues**

### **Security and Safety**

When looking at an apartment or house to rent, you should inspect it carefully to see if there is adequate security. Check the locks on the doors and the lighting in the hallways and stairways as well as the parking areas. Check the windows to see if they have locks that work and which prevent them from being lifted from the frame.

#### ***Locks***

You have a basic right to safety within your home. You can expect your landlord to take some necessary steps to protect the security of your apartment or house. The types of security devices or locks which landlords provide differ, but in some areas, certain security devices or locks are required by minimum housing standards. Call the housing code enforcement department in your city or county to find out what, if anything, is required in your location.

The best type of lock is a deadbolt lock, but it may not be required for your apartment or house. To determine whether a lock is a deadbolt, open the door and then turn the lock. Try to push the bolt (the part which projects into the frame of the door) with your hand. If it does not move, the lock is a deadbolt. If it does move, it is probably some kind of spring latch. Spring latches are the types of locks that can often be opened with a credit card. Dead bolt locks cannot be opened this way. If you feel you need a deadbolt lock to be secure, contact your landlord and ask for a deadbolt lock. Try to get your landlord to agree in writing that he or she will provide you with a new lock. If your landlord refuses, explain why you don't feel your current lock is safe. If he or she still refuses, you may consider renting elsewhere (if you have not signed a lease yet) or paying for the lock yourself (if you already live there). However, you should ask for the landlord's permission (in writing) to install the lock before you buy it. He or she does not have to agree, and you probably have no right to add a lock without the landlord's permission. If you do add a lock, you will have to provide your landlord with a copy of the key so that he or she can enter in case of emergency.

Once the lock is in place it becomes a fixture of the house or apartment and belongs to the landlord. You cannot remove it when you leave. Even though you will be spending your own money and the landlord will not have to pay you back, installing a deadbolt lock may still be a good idea for you to feel safe and secure. If you are a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, you have some additional rights in terms of changing the locks. There is more information about this in the next section, *Rights of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims*.

#### ***Other safety steps***

Once you are in an apartment, there are some things you can do to protect yourself and your property. You should engrave all your valuables with your name. The police department in your city may do this without charge. If not, scratch it in yourself with a sharp object. This may help insure a return of your valuables if they are stolen. If you go out of town for any length of time, have your mail and/or newspaper held or have a neighbor pick them up. Go to the post office and fill out a card to hold your mail. You can pick up your mail at the end of the trip. Ask your neighbor to park her/his car in your driveway or in front of your house so it looks as if someone is home. You may also want to put your lights on a timer to give the place the appearance of activity.

You may want to consider putting only your first initial on your mailbox and in the phone book. This may reduce your chances of being targeted for a crime based on your name or gender. Do not set yourself up for a violent encounter. You don't have to speak to, open the door for, or have any contact with anyone that you do not trust – even if you are married to that person. If you are a victim of physical abuse or violence, whether rape or domestic abuse, you should call the police immediately. There are various social service agencies that can help.

The Illinois Safe Homes Act gives victims of domestic violence or sexual violence additional rights and protections. There is more information about these important rights in the next section, *Rights of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims*.

## **Rights of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims**

The Illinois Safe Homes Act provides victims three important rights so that they can be safe in their rented houses or apartments:

1. The right to change the locks.
2. The right to end a lease early under certain conditions.
3. The right to have information about these things kept confidential.

These rights are available to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, but they do not apply in public housing or certain subsidized housing. The rights *do* apply to housing rented with a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher.

### ***Who is protected by the Safe Homes Act?***

The Safe Homes Act refers to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act's definitions of who is a victim of domestic violence. The definition is very broad, and it includes victims of elder abuse. A person is a victim of domestic violence if he or she has been "abused" by a "family or household member." "Abuse" means physical abuse, harassment, threats, and interference with personal liberty (such as locking someone in a room or preventing him or her from calling the police). "Abuse" also includes putting an elderly, sick or disabled person in danger by purposely denying medication, medical care, shelter, accessible shelter or services, food, therapeutic devices, or other physical assistance, or physically abusing someone else in front of them. "Family or household members" include spouses, former spouses, parents, children, stepchildren and other persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage, persons who share or formerly shared a common dwelling, persons who have or allegedly have a child in common, persons who share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child, persons who have or have had a dating or engagement relationship, persons with disabilities and their personal assistants, and certain caregivers.

Victims of sexual violence also are protected by the Safe Homes Act. "Sexual violence" is much broader than what one might think of as rape. "Sexual violence" means any act of sexual assault, sexual abuse, or stalking of an adult or minor child.

### ***Does the Safe Homes Act allow a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault to change the locks?***

Under the law, if you believe that you or a member of your household is "under a credible imminent threat of domestic or sexual violence at the premises" (in other words, if there is a real threat of violence in the reasonably near future), you have the right to ask the landlord to change the locks. You must make the request to the landlord in writing. This is called a notice. There are additional requirements depending on whether you have a written or oral lease, and whether the threat is coming from a co-tenant or a non-tenant.

### **Information about the notice to the landlord if there is a written lease:**

*If the threat is coming from a non-tenant (a person not on the lease),* you and all the other tenants who signed the lease must sign the written notice to the landlord asking for the locks to be changed; you must attach at least one form of evidence of the threat. Evidence can be medical, court, or police documentation; or a statement from victim's services, domestic violence or rape crisis organization where you or a member of your household went for services.



*If the threat is coming from a co-tenant under the same lease*, you and all other tenants – except for the one who poses the threat – must sign a written notice to the landlord asking for the locks to be changed. The notice must include a copy of a plenary order of protection or plenary civil no contact order giving exclusive possession of the residence to the victim. In other words, the landlord will only change the locks if the court has ordered the tenant who is posing a threat to stay away from the residence.

**Information about the notice to the landlord if there is an oral leases:**

*If the threat is coming from a non-tenant (a person not on the lease)*, you and all of the tenants who are lessees (all the people who rented the apartment) must sign a written notice to the landlord asking for the locks to be changed; the notice must include a copy of a plenary order of protection or plenary civil no contact order giving exclusive possession of the residence to the victim. In other words, the landlord will only change the locks if the court has ordered the person posing a threat to stay away from the residence.

*If the threat is coming from a co-tenant under the same lease*, you and all the other tenants who are lessees must sign a written notice to the landlord asking for the locks to be changed. The notice must include a copy of a plenary order of protection or plenary civil no contact order giving exclusive possession of the residence to the victim. In other words, the landlord will only change the locks if the court has ordered the tenant posing a threat to stay away from the residence.

Once you give the written notice and the documentation or evidence of the abuse to the landlord, the landlord is required to change the locks within 48 hours or tell you that the you have permission to change the locks. If the landlord changes the locks, he or she may charge you for the cost including the new lock and an installation fee. If the landlord does not change the locks within the 48 hours and does not give you permission to do it, you may change the locks without permission. You must use a workmanlike manner and locks of similar or better quality than the existing locks. Whoever changes the locks must give the new keys to the other (the landlord or tenant) within 48 hours.

***When and how can a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault end a lease early?***

The law allows you to end a lease early if you or a member of your household is under a credible imminent threat of domestic or sexual violence at the premises (in other words, if there is a real threat of violence in the reasonably near future) or if you or a member of your household was a victim of sexual violence on the premises. Ending the lease early means that you can leave the property even though the lease term is not up (for example, the lease was for one year and the year has not ended). You do not need the landlord's permission to end the lease early, and you do not owe rent for the time after you leave. However, you must give the landlord written notice of the reason that you are leaving the premises, give the notice before you leave or within three days after you leave with all of your belongings, and return the keys to the landlord. If the landlord sues you for rent for a time after you leave the property, you will have a defense to owing rent as long as you followed the notice procedures.

**Types of notice:** The type of notice you must give the landlord depends on whether you are moving out because of a risk of domestic or sexual violence, or because you or a member of your household was the victim of sexual violence at the residence.

***Tenants under a credible imminent threat of domestic or sexual violence:*** if you or a member of your household are under a credible imminent threat, you must tell the landlord that you are moving out under the Safe Homes Act because of a credible imminent threat of domestic or sexual violence. The

notice should include a date that you have moved or plan to move out of the residence and give the status of the keys for the residence. This notice may include additional information such as that you got an order of protection, the abuser knows where you live, or that you are under a constant threat of harm.

***Sexual Violence Victims:*** if you or a member of your household was a victim of sexual violence at your home or apartment, you must tell the landlord that you are moving out under the Safe Homes Act because of an incident of sexual violence that occurred at the premises. The notice should include a date that you have moved or you plan to move out of the residence, and give the status of the keys for the residence. The notice must include the date of the sexual violence. The law states that the incident must have been within 60 days of giving notice or as soon as practicable under the circumstances (ex: you were in the hospital and/or treatment and you were not able to give notice earlier). You must also include one form of evidence of the sexual violence. This evidence can be medical, court, or police evidence of the sexual violence; or a statement from an employee of a victims services or rape crisis organization where the tenant sought services.

You need to keep proof that you sent the notice to the landlord in case the landlord later tries to sue you for rent after you leave. The best ways to send the notice are through certified mail, email, or fax. If none of those ways is possible, you should deliver the notice in person with a witness.

***What are my privacy rights under the Safe Homes Act?***

The landlord is not permitted to tell any prospective landlord that you used the Safe Homes Act to end the lease early or to change the locks. The landlord also cannot share any of the information from the documentation or evidence that you supplied. This is designed so that you can find a new home without worrying that this situation will come up in the landlord's reference.

***What can I do if my landlord tries to remove me because the police have been called to my home?***

Some cities or towns have ordinances that appear to allow an eviction outside the court process where there have been many police calls to the residence. If your landlord threatens or tries to remove you under one of these ordinances, it is particularly important to talk with a lawyer right away.

***Can my landlord keep my security deposit because I moved out under the Safe Homes Act?***

No, a landlord cannot keep your security deposit because you lawfully exercised your rights under the Safe Homes Act. The Illinois Security Deposit Act still applies to you. For more information, please see *Damage and Security Deposit* beginning on page 33 of this handbook.



## Pets

More than likely, you will find that landlords are not happy about having pets in their rented units. Some leases allow pets, and most require written consent from the landlord before you bring the pet into your house or apartment. If you want to keep a pet in your home, you should make sure your lease states that you can do this. If not, handwrite a sentence in your lease that says pets are allowed and be sure that both you and your landlord sign or initial next to it. Do not rely on the landlord's verbal statement about allowing pets, because that could change. You may think a rule about a pet is a minor part of your lease; however, the landlord has the right to end your lease and evict you if you a rule about pets, so make sure the lease is clear that about pets. Also, be of allowing someone else's pet in your home, even for a short time.

Some landlords may require an extra damage deposit or may charge a higher rent if you have a pet. If you cannot pay this, look for another place or find another home for your pet.

If a tenant needs a service, support, or therapy animal because of a disability, a landlord is not allowed to refuse the animal or charge an extra damage deposit. An example of a service animal is a seeing eye dog for a person who is blind or has other vision impairments. An example of a support animal is a dog or cat who serves as an emotional support for a tenant with a mental disability such as post-traumatic stress disorder. For more information on this topic, see the section titled *Discrimination and Housing* on page 11.

If you are the one who does not want pets in the building because you are sensitive to noise or have allergies, make sure the landlord guarantees in writing that the premises will be quiet or that no tenant will be allowed to have pets. Then if the landlord does not take action to stop loud noises from neighboring apartments or if your neighbors have pets, you may be able to get out of your lease. See the section titled *How To Get Out of Your Lease* on page 63.

## When a Landlord May Enter

Most leases have clauses that allow the landlord to enter your house or apartment to examine its condition, to make repairs, or to show the house or apartment to possible new tenants. Try to find a lease that provides for a specific amount of notice (for example at least 24 hours ahead of time if there is no emergency) and other limits on entry (for example, only at certain times of the day). If your lease is silent on this topic or you have an oral lease, then the general rule is that the landlord may enter with reasonable notice during reasonable times of the day except in case of an emergency when he or she can enter at any time without notice. A local ordinance may limit the times or circumstances under which the landlord can enter, but there is no such state law. There also is no law defining the terms "reasonable notice" or "reasonable time" under the general rule, so you do not have much protection and disputes with the landlord can easily arise.

Nonetheless, you do have some rights to privacy in your apartment or house. Even if your lease does not specifically require reasonable notice or entry at a reasonable hour, you still have an implied right to privacy. If your landlord frequently comes into your apartment without notice and at unreasonable hours, you should seek legal help. As a tenant, you are entitled to possession of the premises and your landlord cannot interfere unreasonably with your use and enjoyment of the premises. Therefore, if your landlord is unnecessarily invading your right to possession and privacy, you may take legal action against him or her. If you feel that the landlord or his or her employees are harassing you sexually, you may have a claim for housing discrimination. For more information on this topic, see the section titled *Discrimination and Housing* on page 11.

As an alternative to seeking legal advice, or under the advice of an attorney, you may want to send a letter like the following one to encourage your landlord to respect your privacy.

Dear Landlord:

As a tenant of the premises located at (address), I have certain privacy rights. I request that in the future you follow these reasonable rules before entering my home:

1. Call at least 24 hours before you plan on coming over to let me know when you or a repair person will be here. Then, please be on time.
2. If you cannot call 24 hours ahead of time, call as soon as you can before you come over. If at all possible, I will make arrangements to let you in, but do not be upset if it is inconvenient for me to have you in on such short notice.
3. Do not enter my home unless I am home, I have given you permission on that occasion to enter without my presence, or there is some real emergency that you must inspect.
4. No matter what the circumstances, always knock before you enter and wait for someone to open the door. If you follow these rules, I will welcome you as a guest whenever possible. If you do not follow these rules, I will refuse to allow you to enter.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Although the landlord may not have to follow these rules, stating them clearly may prevent problems in the future. As with all correspondence with your landlord, keep a copy.

## **Your Rights if You Rent a Mobile Home or Lot**

People who rent mobile homes or lots in Illinois mobile home parks with five or more mobile homes have special rights under the Mobile Home Landlord and Tenant Rights Act. The law recognizes that even though you rent a lot, moving to another park with your mobile home is no easy thing. If you rent a mobile home or lot, you have the right to:

- A written lease for at least two years (unless you agree in writing to a shorter term or a month-to-month lease); oral lease agreements are not allowed under the statute;
- Cancel the first lease within 3 days of signing it if you have not yet moved into the park;
- Receive certain information before you sign the first lease and each time you renew your lease, such as the amount of rent charged for that home or lot in the past five years, and the amount of rent the park owner expects to charge over the next three years (that is, a year beyond your two-year lease);
- Have all park fees itemized specifically in your lease;
- A five-day grace period each month to pay rent without incurring a late charge;
- 90 days' notice of an increase in rent, which can only occur at the end of your lease (except that the two-year lease may include a rent increase at the end of the first year);
- Automatic renewal of your lease unless you give your landlord 30 days' notice, or your landlord gives you 30 days' notice stating that you have violated your lease or park rules;
- In certain circumstances, stay in your home for up to a year at the old rental rate while attempting to sell the mobile home;
- Sell your home without interference by the park and without being required to pay a fee to the park unless the park performs a service in connection with the sale;
- Arrange for a relative to live in your home for up to 90 days as a temporary tenant if you are required to leave the home due to disability or illness;
- Make a complaint to a government agency about the conditions of the park;
- Terminate the lease on written notice if the park owner fails to substantially comply with the lease or laws, if certain requirements are met;
- Organize and participate in meetings of residents and a homeowner's association;
- Receive 12 months' notice if the park owner plans to close the park;
- File a lawsuit to enforce all of your rights under the law (the court may award damages or grant an injunction or other relief);
- Pay no more than one month's rent as a security deposit;
- Receive an itemized list of damages within 15 days after the termination or expiration of the lease;
- Yearly interest on your security deposit if your mobile home park contains 25 or more mobile homes.

**NOTE:** Some of these rights depend on your action, such as providing certain notice to the park. If you have questions about the specific requirements or if you think your rights have been violated, speak with an attorney.

### ***Park Rules***

You must obey all reasonable rules made by the owner or manager of the park regarding the park and your mobile home or lot. The park owner or manager must give you a copy of all rules and regulations before you sign your lease, and must give you 30 days' notice before implementing a new rule.

If you do not follow the rules, the park can evict you from your mobile home or lot. Before the park can file an eviction suit against you, it must give you a written notice of the violation and 24 hours to correct the problem. If the problem is not corrected, the park owner may then serve you with a 10 day eviction notice for the violation(s). However, all notices must be properly served to be valid. See the section titled *Notice and Court Proceedings* on page 69. The park owner or manager must take you to court to evict you, and you have the right to defend your eviction before a judge or a jury.

### **Special Considerations if You are in Low-Income (Subsidized or Public) Housing**

There are many kinds of low-income housing, including the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, project-based housing which is managed by a private developer, and public housing which is managed by a public housing authority. Each of these programs has its own set of rules and regulations, established by the government and by the housing provider. This means that if you live in low-income housing or have a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, you have special rights and responsibilities in your housing. For example, some types of housing include longer notice periods before an eviction than the notice periods set by Illinois law and some of the types of housing include the right to a lease renewal. But as a tenant in low-income housing you also have additional responsibilities that tenants in private housing do not have. The most important of these is to report all of your household members' income and any changes in your income or who is living with you. Your right to stay in low-income housing can also be affected by a criminal conviction or guilty plea; if you are charged with a crime, be sure to talk to your attorney about this so that you consider all of the possible consequences of a guilty plea.

Explaining all of the types of housing and the rights and responsibilities of tenants in each type would take many pages. We are not attempting to include that information in this handbook. If you have questions about your rights in low-income housing, read the materials you received from your housing provider including your lease, visit [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org), or speak with a lawyer.



## Utilities – an Overview

### **Applying for Service**

When you apply for utility service, the utility company will first decide if you owe that company any money. They can look only at your payment record for the same service for which you are applying. This means that if you are applying for electric service, the electric company can only look to see if you have a past due bill to that company for electricity at your current or past addresses. If you did not pay your water bill or some other bill, the electric company cannot refuse to give you service for that reason. If the utility says you owe them money, you have the right to ask them for their records that support the debt. The utility cannot consider as past due any debts owing by persons other than you. Past due debts do not include a debt incurred by a spouse from whom you have separated at a location separate from your own. You have a right to dispute the validity of past due debts with the utility and with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

If the utility company determines that you failed to pay a bill for the same service at your present or former address, the company can refuse to give you service unless:

- you pay your past due bills in full and enter into a payment plan for any required deposit. See the section below on *Deposits*; or
- you enter into a deferred payment arrangement (DPA) to pay off the past debt (The utility may or may not allow a DPA in this situation, but if they don't, they need to give you a written statement explaining their reasons); See the section below on *Deferred Payment Arrangements*; or
- you are seeking reconnection during the winter heating season and you qualify for a special winter DPA to pay off the debt under rules for reconnection of former customers for the heating season. See the section below on *Winter Reconnection Rules*.

The utility must send you written notice of approval or rejection of your application within 2 business days from the date you provide them with all required information. If they deny your application, the notice has to tell you the specific reasons.

### **Utility Deposits**

The utility company can ask for a deposit if you are applying for service and have failed to pay your past due bills to that utility for the same class of service or your credit score fails to meet a minimum standard. As an applicant, you might be required to pay a deposit if the utility identifies you as a person who has used various types of deception to avoid payment for utility service. If you are already a customer, the utility company can ask for a deposit if you have paid late four times in the past 12 months AND your account has an undisputed past due balance that has remained unpaid for over 30 days beyond the due date. However, if you are a present customer, you can avoid the requirement to pay a deposit if you enter into and keep current with a deferred payment arrangement (DPA) for the unpaid balance, assuming you enter the DPA before the company assesses the deposit. Whether you are an applicant or a current customer, the utility can require a deposit if the company has proof that you tampered with the wiring, pipes, meter or any other service equipment.

If the company wants to ask for a deposit, they must do it within 45 days after they have approved your application or after the event that caused them to ask for a deposit.



The size of the deposit can be no greater than 1/6 of the total of your annual charges (about a 2 month bill). You may be able to pay the deposit in installments. A utility may require payment of 1/3 of the deposit with the first bill you receive after they say you owe a deposit. You will need to pay the remaining 2/3 of the deposit in equal installment amounts in your next two bill statements. However, the utility may require the deposit to be collected in a single amount if you used various types of deception to avoid payment in the past.

If you have a question about the amount of your deposit, ask the utility company about it.

Generally, you should get your deposit back with interest after one year so long as there has been no tampering with service equipment, no disconnections for non-payment and less than four late payments. When you are entitled to a refund, the utility will send you a check unless you ask them to credit your refund on the next regular bill. Your deposit will be generating interest, and even if you are not entitled to a refund, after 12 consecutive months of accumulated interest, the utility must automatically credit your account with the interest earned, and it will be itemized on your next regular bill statement as "deposit interest." You should also get your deposit back when you stop service or after disconnection from service, minus any money owed to the company. If you do not receive your deposit back, find out why. If you are still not satisfied, make a complaint. See the section titled *Dispute and Complaint Procedures* on page 57.

## **Electricity and Gas**

Utilities are an added expense that you must consider with the rent amount in deciding whether you can afford to rent an apartment or house. When making that decision, you should ask how much these bills usually cost. For example, a building may not have good insulation, so the heating bill could be higher than expected.

Refer to your lease if you have any questions about who pays for electricity and/or gas. If the lease requires that the landlord provide and pay for any utilities, then the landlord must do so. If the lease requires that the tenant pay for specific utilities, then you must do so. If the lease does not say who provides or pays for utilities, then it is the landlord's responsibility. Make sure that these responsibilities are addressed clearly in your lease or in writing elsewhere. This will save a lot of trouble once the bills start arriving.

Contact the utility company before you move in so that you can have your service connected the day you arrive. You must allow at least one business day for turning on your electricity and gas. You can probably do this by phone rather than by going to the utility company's office. Remember to stop the utilities at your old address as soon as you move out, so that you do not build up a bill for that service.

If you smell gas at any time, call the gas company. They will send someone out as soon as possible to identify the problem. If you cannot reach the gas company, call the fire department for emergency shut off.

## **Water**

In larger apartment complexes, the landlord usually supplies water at no extra charge to the tenant, but be sure to get that in writing to avoid problems. If the water is not mentioned, be sure to contact your landlord before calling the water company. There are both private and municipal water companies. You will need to find out which company provides water to your home.

If your water bill is high, check the faucets and the valve inside the tank of your toilet for leaks. Contact your landlord for repairs. Even though you may not be responsible for the water bill, you want to notify the landlord of any problems so that you can avoid any liability for the cost of the water.

### **Telephone**

If you had a landline at the address you are leaving, contact your telephone service provider to either stop service or have it changed to a new address. There will be a minimum installation charge if the telephone jacks are already in place and you supply the phone for your new home. If the equipment is not already in place, the fee will vary depending on the number of phone lines and services you request. The company will usually require an advance payment of one average monthly bill for new customers. If you have had phone service in the past and have paid your bills on time, there is no reason why you should have to pay a deposit. Complain to a supervisor if you feel you are being treated unfairly. If you are required to pay a deposit, you will receive interest on your deposit after one year. The amount of the deposit will depend on your service and credit rating.

A lot of companies offer bundled residential phone, television and internet services at a discounted price. Make sure you review any of these costs in relation to your monthly budget. Carefully read through all contracts before you sign them, and pay attention to the length of the contract and any other hidden charge. It is best to make sure that you only obtain the actual services you need, to avoid unwanted costs.

## **Utility Problems, Solutions and Other Issues**

### **If Your Landlord Provides Utilities**

If your lease or other agreement with the landlord requires the landlord to pay the water, gas or electric utilities but he or she does not, there are things you can do to prevent a shutoff. In this situation, the tenant, or a group of tenants served by a common meter, may pay for the utility service if non-payment threatens continued service. Any amounts that a tenant pays for utilities that the landlord was required to pay may be deducted from the rent due by the tenant or tenants. The landlord cannot evict you for this nor can he or she raise the rent. In buildings with three or more apartments, the utility company cannot terminate service for the landlord's non-payment until they deliver a special notice to all the tenants. If the utility company receives payment in full of all past due amounts from the tenants, the utility company must restore service to the tenants.

The utility company must also restore and continue service to any tenant who requests that the utility put the bill in his or her name and establishes satisfactory credit references or pays a deposit. The utility should not require the tenant to pay the past due bills, only the bills going forward. Once the bill is changed into the tenant's name, if the tenant is billed an amount for service to parts of the premises not occupied by the tenant, the landlord is liable to the tenant for those bills.

It is unlawful for a landlord to cause utility service to tenants to be interrupted or terminated by failing to pay bills for which he or she is responsible. The landlord also cannot cause service to be interrupted by tampering with the utility's equipment or lines. If either happens, the tenant may not be required to pay rent as long as the utility service is interrupted; however the best approach in this situation is to continue paying rent and talk with an attorney. A court could also order the landlord to pay other damages to a tenant in this situation.

For multi-unit buildings, tenants also may wish to consider filing a lawsuit to ask the court to appoint a receiver to collect the rent for the building and use it pay the utility bill the landlord owes but has failed to pay. If the court finds that the utility service has been or may be shut off due to the landlord's non-payment of a utility bill the landlord owes, the court should appoint a receiver to collect the rent and pay the bill. Because this option involves a filing a lawsuit, and other options may be easier for tenants to try, tenants should seek legal advice to evaluate the best option for their specific circumstances as well as advice on how to petition the court to appoint a receiver.

It is against the law for a landlord to make you pay for utilities for common areas of the building or for other tenants, unless the landlord gives you certain information in writing before you sign the lease or agree to rent. Check with an attorney to see if you got the proper information. Also, it is against the law for a landlord in a multi-unit building with a master meter to demand that the tenants pay a share of the utilities, unless the landlord tells the tenants in writing how she or he splits utility payments among the tenants. If you find yourself in either of these situations, talk with an attorney. Your landlord may be required to pay you back for your utility bills, plus possible additional damages.

## Deferred Payment Arrangements

The information in this section applies only to utilities which are governed by the Illinois Commerce Commission, which are usually the large utility companies. These rules may not cover some local utilities.

If you owe money to a utility company that you cannot pay all at once and you are currently a customer, the utility company may give you a chance to keep your service and pay off the debt in installments. The utility calls this a “deferred payment arrangement (DPA).”

A utility company must give a current customer a DPA upon request unless the customer has failed to make a payment under a prior DPA during the past 12 months. This right lasts as long as your utility service remains connected. Once you are on a DPA, your bill must show the amount of your installments, how much you have left to pay on it, and an explanation that a late or partial payment could result in cancellation of the DPA. Cancellation means that the total deferred amount is now due in full, and that non-payment could result in disconnection.

If you are applying for new service from the utility company, but owe a past due bill, it is up to the utility company to decide whether to give you a DPA. If you are a former customer whose service has been cut off for non-payment and you are applying for a winter reconnection, the utility company must offer you a DPA, but only if you are otherwise eligible under special rules. See *Winter Re-connection Rules* on page 56.

Any DPA must be in writing and will require that you pay a certain amount of money, usually in equal installments, for a certain number of months. This will be **in addition** to the regular bill, as it comes due. You will be required to pay up to 25% of the past due amount at the time of entering into the DPA. For information on situations when your down-payment can be smaller, see the sections titled *When a Utility Plans to Shut Off Your Services* and *Winter Re-connection Rules* on pages 53 and 56. The time for the completion of the DPA shall be set between 4 to 12 billing cycles, but the utility has the discretion to agree to more than 12 billing cycles for completion of the DPA. In determining the length of time to offer, the utility considers your ability to successfully complete the DPA.

If you default (miss a payment) on a DPA, the utility must notify you of the default and tell you how much you must pay to reinstate the DPA or risk cancellation. The utility can consider you in default if you fail to pay the full amount of the installment and the current bill by the second day after the bill due date.

If your financial circumstances change during the period of the DPA, you are allowed to renegotiate the length of the DPA, taking into account your new circumstances (up to an additional 4- 12 billing cycles). You are allowed only one renegotiation during the course of a DPA, provided you have made at least the down payment and you have not defaulted on it.

If you default on a DPA by missing a scheduled payment, but your gas or electric services have not yet been disconnected, you can get your DPA reinstated. The utility will reinstate your DPA if you pay the amount of the DPA installments owing up to that date, including all other past due bills that were not included in the original DPA amount. The utility cannot charge you any reinstatement fee for the first reinstatement of any DPA, but can charge such a fee if you default and seek reinstatement again. If any defaulted DPA is not reinstated, the utility company has the right to terminate your service.



However, even if you default on a DPA, you still have right to establish a winter DPA under the Winter Reconnection Rules (see below).

A DPA is often a last chance; make sure you will be able to make the payments before you agree to a plan, and then do everything you can to follow the DPA agreement.

### **Deferred Payment Arrangements for Low Income Customers**

There are special rules for low-income utility customers to make it easier to get a DPA. The utility will consider you “low-income” if you apply and qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and your local LIHEAP administrator has notified your utility of your low-income status. Most of the rules above for DPA’s still apply but there some differences if you are low-income. The differences are:

- The maximum down payment is 20% of the past due amounts (instead of 25%).
- The length of the DPA term is set between 6- 12 billing cycles (instead of 4 - 12 billing cycles).
- There can never be a reinstatement fee.
- You have a right to change the terms (lower monthly payments and a longer time to pay it off) of your first DPA if you have made at least 2 consecutive full payments before you default and if you have not been in default on that DPA for more than 90 days. To get the amended DPA, the utility may require that you participate in a Budget Payment Plan. Under a Budget Payment Plan, your monthly bills are equalized, based on your average monthly bill.

## **Estimated Bills**

Your bill is determined by reading the meter that measures how much energy you have used. All utility companies are required to take an actual meter reading at least every second billing period, unless they have been prevented from doing so. A utility must take an actual reading of your meter every billing period if that meter is equipped with a remote reading device.

If the utility company is unable to read your meter, the company may have you do it and then call your reading in. It may leave a card and request that you mark it and mail it in with the reading. After six consecutive months of getting your readings, a utility must take an actual reading of the meter.

If you do not respond to the utility's request to read your meter, the company will estimate how much you have used by looking at the past service history of your residence. When the utility company does actually read your meter, the estimate is corrected and you could be in for a surprise of a very large bill or a very small bill. Usually, however, the estimate is not far off. At any rate, you end up paying only for what you use. If you do receive a card, it is to your benefit to read the meter and send the card to the company or to call in the information to protect yourself from surprises. If you have any questions about how to read the meter, the utility company will explain it to you or send you a pamphlet.

Your bill must indicate whether it is an estimated bill, or a bill based on an actual reading, or based upon a customer reading. Unless the utility's attempt to access the meter has been prevented, the utility cannot disconnect you for non-payment of two or more consecutive estimated bills until it takes an actual reading of the meter to verify the accuracy of the billing.

## **Late Payment Charges**

The utility prints your due date on the bill. If you pay late, you may be billed a late payment charge. Payment is late when the utility has not received it within two days after the due date on the bill. The utility "receives" the payment when it arrives at the utility and not when it is posted to its bank account.

The due date on the bill may not be less than 21 days after the date of postmark on the bill. The amount of the late charge cannot exceed 1.5% per month of the amount that is late. If you receive a monthly benefit or support check that comes after the due date, you can ask the utility for a later payment date.

Note: The utility cannot charge any late payment fee to a customer while he or she is qualified as a low-income customer.



## **When a Utility Plans to Shut Off (Disconnect) Your Service**

### ***Allowable Reasons for a Shut Off:***

A utility company can shut off your service for a variety of reasons, if:

- You fail to pay a proper deposit or a past due bill for the same class of service;
- You fail to make a regular payment;
- You deny access to a meter;
- You steal service or tamper with the utility's equipment, or violate utility rules;
- There are unsafe conditions or they need to cooperate with civil authorities.

However, in most cases, the company first must give you a proper written notice separate from any bill. This notice must be in a certain form and must be on red paper. No notice is required if the shut-off is due to theft of service or tampering or unsafe conditions or maintenance work, or if you have requested the disconnection.

The utility must send or deliver this notice to you at least ten (10) days before shutting off the service. A utility cannot act on a notice over 45 days after they issued it, in which case they must send a new notice to terminate service. If you get a regular monthly bill after getting a disconnect notice, that bill does not invalidate the notice or extend the time for a shut-off.

You are also entitled to get warning call (live or automated) at least 48 hours before a shut-off unless you have no phone number on record. A second call is required 24 hours before shut-off if the first call did not reach a person or an answering machine.

### ***When a shutoff is not allowed***

1. **Day and Time Restrictions:** Except for matters of safety, emergency maintenance and cooperation with civil authorities, a utility cannot shut you off at any of the following times, unless it is prepared to take your payment and reconnect you the same day:
  - After 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday;
  - After noon on Friday;
  - On Saturday or Sunday;
  - On a State of Illinois or utility holiday, or after noon on any day before such a holiday.

Also, a utility cannot disconnect you at any time during which it does not have its customer service personnel available to handle a contact from a customer, or within one hour before.

2. **Deferred Payment Arrangements:** The utility cannot shut you off if you have entered into a DPA and are following the agreement. If the utility has already shut off service, the utility must restore it when you enter into the DPA.
3. **Disputes:** The utility cannot shut you off if you are disputing the reason for the shutoff with the utility company or with the Illinois Commerce Commission. See *Dispute and Complaint Procedures* on page 57.

4. **Cold Weather:** If gas or electric service is necessary to heat your residence, the utility cannot shut you off on any day the National Weather Service forecast for any of the following 24 hours covering your area shows that the temperature will be 32° F. or less.
5. **Military Personnel:** The utility cannot shut off service for non-payment of gas or electric service at the last residential premises of military personnel immediately before they went on active duty. If any residential customer notifies the utility that he or she is a service member or veteran, the utility cannot shut off service needed for heat on any day between December 1 through and including March 31 of the next calendar year.
6. **LIHEAP Customers during the Winter:** The utility cannot shut off service for non-payment of a bill or deposit on any day between December 1 and March 31 of the next calendar year if you currently participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.
7. **Medical Certification:** The utility cannot shut off service for 60 days after they receive a valid medical certificate from a doctor (or board of health) for any resident of the household. If you were disconnected before they got the certificate, the 60 day period begins when the utility restores your service. If a doctor provides a valid medical certificate to the utility within 14 days after a disconnection, the utility must restore service within one day after getting the certificate. The utility may accept the certificate (but doesn't have to) if it comes later than the 14 days.

To be valid, the doctor's certificate must state in writing the name and address of the ill person, a statement that he or she is a resident of the premises, and a statement that a disconnection of utility service will aggravate an existing medical emergency or create a medical emergency for the patient. The doctor can initially certify by phone if a written certification follows within 7 days after the phone call.

Your first bill will be due 30 days after the date on the medical certificate. If the utility receives the medical certificate before shut off, your first bill will show that you must pay an amount equal to  $\frac{1}{12}$ <sup>th</sup> of the total amount you owe to the utility and it will show the remaining 11 installments of equal amounts to be paid on future bills. If the utility receives and accepts the medical certificate after a shut off, your first bill will show that you must pay an amount equal to  $\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> of the total amount you owe to the utility and show the remaining 9 installments of equal amounts to be paid on future bills.

Once you pay off your entire account balance, or if 12 months have passed since the start of the medical certification, you can get a new medical certification for another 60 day period.

#### ***When a Shut Off is Not Allowed by Utilities Serving More than 100,000 Residential Customers***

For very large utilities, there are additional circumstances where a shut-off is not allowed:

1. **Hot Weather:** If gas or electricity is used as the only source of space cooling or to control or operate the only space cooling equipment, on any day when the National Weather Service

forecast for any of the following 24 hours covering the area of the residence shows that the temperature will be 95 degrees F. or above. This rule also applies on any day before a weekend or holiday if a temperature of 95° F. or more is forecast for the weekend or holiday.

2. Electric Space-Heating Customer Winter Disconnection Prohibition: From December 1 through March 31 of the following year, these utilities cannot shut off your electric service needed for heat for non-payment.

### ***Winter shutoff rules December 1 through March 31***

During the winter months, the electric and gas companies, before they can shut off service needed to heat your residence, must send you a special winter notice that notifies you (by phone, visit or mail) of the following things:

- That your account is in arrears and that they might shut off your service for non-payment of a bill.
- That you can avoid a shut-off by entering into a deferred payment arrangement (DPA) to pay past due amounts and that you have the option to enter into a budget payment plan for the payment of future bills (equalized payments every month).
- That you can apply for financial aid to help pay your bills from a list of agencies that utility will give to you.

A winter DPA must give you at least 4 months to pay but can go as far as the next November. The maximum down payment that the utility can demand for a DPA in this situation is 10% of the amount past due. In a budget payment plan, the customer pays for current service in approximately the same dollar amount every month. In addition, the utility must provide the customer threatened with shutoff with names and numbers of agencies that help people pay their utility bills.

If you receive a winter shut off notice, you have six business days from date of the notice to arrange for your DPA and any necessary financial assistance, so you must move quickly. Talk to the company about it. If you get no results, contact an attorney immediately. Do not wait until your utility service is shut off because you have more rights before the shutoff. If your utility already has shut you off, you may have to pay the entire balance to be reconnected, unless you qualify for the winter re-connection rules.

Also during the winter months, the utilities are limited in the following ways:

- They cannot make you pay a down payment for a deposit that is greater than 20% of the total deposit, and must give you an additional 4 months to pay the rest of the deposit.
- They cannot refuse to give you a winter DPA because you may have defaulted on a prior DPA with the past 12 months. (However, they don't have to give you more than one DPA each winter)
- They must allow you to show that you have been approved for LIHEAP, and then, at your request, allow the amount you will be entitled to receive in LIHEAP benefits to be deducted from your past due amounts. This will result in a smaller monthly amount in your DPA.
- They cannot send you a shut off notice if you have not defaulted on a DPA or a deposit requirement.

### ***Winter reconnection rules***

If your utility shut off your service needed for heat for nonpayment of a bill or deposit at any time since December 1 of the prior winter, you can get service turned back on between November 1 and April 1 of the current heating season. [You can get service turned on as early as October 1, if you have an application pending for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)]. (See page 60 for more information.)

Here is how to qualify:

- You must not have used the special winter reconnection rules the previous year.
- You must have paid at least 1/3 of all utility services charged since December 1 of the prior winter. If you did not pay the required amount before you were shut off, you can qualify by paying the required amount when you seek reconnection. You can use LIHEAP benefits for that purpose.
- You must pay the charges associated with any tampering if the utility can prove that you benefitted from any tampering with its equipment.
- You must enter into a deferred payment arrangement (DPA) with the utility company, pay 1/3 of the amount past due (including a reconnection charge if any), and pay 1/3 of any required deposit. You and the utility must agree to a payment schedule for the remaining balances which will reasonably allow you to make the payments on the remainder of the deposit and the past due balance while paying current bills during the winter heating season. The utility must allow you a minimum of four months in which to retire the past due balance and a minimum of three months in which to pay the remainder of the deposit. You can try to negotiate for a longer period to pay the past due amount, but the utility does not have to allow the DPA to extend beyond the following November.
- You must continue to pay both your DPA amounts and your current bills as they come due, or be subject to a shut off again.

If you were approved for LIHEAP or if you can show the utility company that you cannot afford to pay those amounts, you can get reconnected upon paying 20% of the amount past due and 20% of any required deposit. To show that you cannot afford these amounts, you should provide the utility with the combined income and financial resources of all persons residing in your household, the combined household expenses, and the reasons why you fell behind in your payments.

If you qualify for winter reconnection, then the utility company must reconnect your service as soon as possible.



## **Dispute and Complaint Procedures**

There is a process for you to dispute any issues you have with the utility. You can complain first to the utility, and if that doesn't work, you can complain to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), which is the government agency that regulates public utilities in this state. When you dispute a bill, either with the utility or at the ICC, a utility company cannot shut off your services for non-payment during the complaint process so as long as you:

1. Pay the undisputed portion of the bill (the part you agree you owe);
2. Pay all future monthly bills by the due date; and
3. Follow in good faith the dispute procedures of the utility company and the ICC.

### ***Complaints to the Utility***

If you question a bill or have a problem with your utility service that is not being resolved, you can call the utility company and ask for a staff person who handles disputes. The utility has 14 days to respond to the complaint. If the dispute still cannot be resolved, you have the right to have the problem considered and acted on by a utility supervisor without delay. If the complaint involves a dispute over the amount billed, you must pay the undisputed part of the bill or an amount equal to last year's bill at the same location for the same period.

The utility cannot assess any late fees on any amount in dispute while the complaint remains unresolved. Once it is resolved, you can avoid late fees if you pay the resolved amount within 14 days, provided that you disputed the amount before it became past due.

Once the utility gives you a final answer on your complaint, but you do not wish to accept it, the utility must tell you of your right to appeal the utility's decision to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to make an informal complaint. They must also give you contact information for the Commission's Consumer Services Division. In the case of a pending shut off, the utility cannot disconnect you for at least 3 business days to give you a chance to make an informal complaint to the ICC.

### ***Complaints to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)***

At any time during your attempts to resolve the dispute with the utility company, you have the right to have the problem reviewed by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), the state agency that regulates public utilities. Note that municipal utilities are not subject to the ICC rules or their complaint procedures.

The ICC has both an informal and a formal complaint procedure. The first step is an informal complaint to the ICC Consumer Services Division. You can file an informal complaint online at <http://www.icc.illinois.gov/consumer/complaint/wizard.aspx> or you can file a complaint by phone, 1-800/524-0795 or TTY at 800/858-9277. That office will investigate the complaint and try to resolve it to the satisfaction of all the parties, but it cannot force an agreement. Except when you agree to a non-written process, the utility must answer the informal complaint within 14 days. After receiving the utility response, the Consumer Services Division has 14 days to contact you to review the results of the informal complaint. If the utility fails to respond to the informal complaint within 14 days, you may file a formal complaint to the ICC. If you agree to the non-written process, the Consumer Services Division may work to resolve the complaint by immediate direct contact between the parties.

If the dispute still has not been resolved, then you can file a formal complaint with the ICC, and the Consumer Services Division must advise you of this right. If you say you intend to file a formal complaint, the Consumer Services Division notifies the utility; the utility then must give you at least 10 business days to file that complaint without shutting off your service.

If you are seeking a remedy for an incorrect billing or otherwise seeking monetary damages against the utility, there is a legal deadline to file your formal complaint. In that case, you must file your complaint within 2 years from the time you first had knowledge of the incorrect billing or from the time the facts giving rise to your complaint arose.

You must use the informal complaint process before filing a formal complaint. The only exception to that rule is where you must file the formal complaint in order avoid missing the 2 year deadline explained above.

If you file a formal, you must follow the ICC Rules of Practice and it is best to have an attorney assist you. There will be a hearing before a hearing examiner who has the power to resolve the dispute by order and whose orders can be reviewed in the courts.

If the dispute still has not been resolved, then you can file a formal complaint with the ICC. If you do so, you must follow the ICC Rules of Practice and it is best to have an attorney assist you. There will be a hearing before a hearing examiner who has the power to resolve the dispute by order and whose orders can be reviewed in the courts.

When you do question a bill, a utility company cannot shut off your services for non-payment during the complaint process so as long as you:

1. Pay the undisputed portion of the bill (the part you agree you owe);
2. Pay all future monthly bills by the due date; and
3. Follow in good faith the dispute procedures of the utility company and the ICC.



## Energy Saving Tips

With today's prices, it is important that you take a good look at the expense of your utility bills. Heating and cooling your home is a large portion of energy costs. There are several ways you can reduce the load on your heating or cooling equipment and save money:

1. Test for drafts and then draft-proof windows and doors. One method to test for drafts is to take a lighted candle and move it around the frames and sashes of the window. If the flame flickers, you need weather stripping. Another way to test is to slide a quarter under the door. If it fits and goes through, you need weather stripping to fill the gap. Try caulking or taping with heavy plastic tape or use foam rubber. You also might try putting plastic tightly over the windows with tacks to seal out drafts. You also can fill a gap at the bottom of a door tube filled with bags, or a rolled up rug.
2. Do not turn the heat on until you have to. Use an extra blanket on cool nights and dress warmly during the day.
3. Lower your thermostat to 65 or 67 ° F. during the day and lower it to 60 or 62° F. at night.
4. Shut the vents in rooms you do not occupy regularly.

Overcooling is also a problem in the summer with overuse of air conditioning. Try not to use more than you need. The following are some cooling energy savers:

1. Shut off room air conditioners or close vents of rooms you are not occupying.
2. When you use the air conditioning, set your thermostat at 78°, an energy efficient indoor temperature.
3. Do not set your air conditioner at a colder temperature when you first turn it on. This will not cool the room any faster.
4. Set the fan on high except in hot, humid weather. When it's humid, set the fan on a lower speed; you get less cooling, but this will draw more moisture from the air.

## **The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that helps eligible low-income households pay for winter energy costs, which usually means gas and/or electric service. Where the heat is gas, LIHEAP helps with electric only when it is an integral part of the heating system or heat-related. The program is administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and a network of local organizations known as Community Action Agencies (CAAs). You apply for the benefits at your local CAA. You must go in person but if you are homebound there are other options.

LIHEAP is not an entitlement program, meaning that not everyone who is eligible will be able to get assistance. The funds are limited, and are given on a first-come first-served basis until they run out. In Illinois, LIHEAP starts on November 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. There is a two-month priority period for seniors and people with disabilities, who can take advantage of the program starting September 1<sup>st</sup>. Household with children under age 6 and people whose utility is off already can apply starting October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Eligibility guidelines and standards can vary each year. Recently, eligibility has been based on 150% of the federal poverty level. Some of the highlights of the program include:

1. **Cash Assistance:** For households where the electric service is included in the rent and household's rental costs are greater than 30% of the household income. One time direct payment in cash.
2. **Direct Vendor Payment:** For households who pay their own utilities. One time direct payment to the household's utility account
3. **LIHEAP PIPP:** LIHEAP clients who are customers of Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Nicor Gas and Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas may choose the new Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP). Under PIPP, clients pay a percentage of their income, receive a monthly benefit toward their utility bill, and receive a reduction in overdue payments for every on-time payment they make by the bill due date.
4. **Reconnection assistance:** If your household is disconnected or has a disconnect notice from an energy source needed for heating, or has a delivered fuel supplier that has refused to deliver to you, Reconnection Assistance is available. However, it is only provided to households that have made an effort to maintain their energy services or who can pay a portion of the reconnection assistance.
5. **Furnace Assistance:** This will be provided to households that qualify for reconnection assistance, but do not have an operating furnace or heating supply for their residence. Furnace benefits, which include tune-up, repair, or replacement will be utilized to restore a vital heat supply to the home.

Illinois does not have a summer cooling assistance program at this time. This link can help you find a cooling center if you need to get to a cool place during hot weather:

<https://www.illinois.gov/KeepCool/SitePages/CoolingCenters.aspx>

## **Weatherization**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the local Community Action Agencies also administer the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) to help low

income residents and households conserve fuel and reduce energy costs by making their homes and apartments more energy efficient. Weatherization services that can be funded through IHWAP include:

- Air sealing
- Attic and wall insulation
- Furnace repair and replacement
- Electric base load reduction (lighting and refrigerator, and window and door weatherization)
- Maximum \$7,500 per eligible client's home for energy-related weatherization and repair work

Eligibility depends on household income (income of everyone living in the unit). To be eligible to receive assistance, the household's combined income must be at or below 150% or 200% of the federal poverty level, depending on the particular source of the federal or state funds supporting the work.

### **LIHEAP and Weatherization Applications**

You can apply at your local Community Action Agency once the application period opens. Once an application is complete, the CAA must notify the client of approval or denial within 30 days. All client and vendor payments should be made by the CAA within 15 days after approval of an application. If a disconnection has caused a life-threatening situation, the CAA has 18 hours from when you complete the application to review the application and notify the utility of the payment.

### **LIHEAP Appeals**

If your application for LIHEAP or weatherization assistance is denied or not acted on promptly, or if you disagree with the amount of benefit the CAA decided to give you, you can appeal. The appeal process includes the following levels:

1. The Informal Conference. The CAA designates a hearing officer to conduct the informal conference, which is designed to make sure that you understand the actions taken or any reason for delay. At the end of the conference, the hearing officer must give you a written decision.
2. The State Review. If you are not satisfied with that decision, you can request a state review, which is conducted by a DCEO staff person. That person will review your file and must send you a decision in writing within 15 days of your request for review.
3. The Formal Hearing. If you are not satisfied with the state review, you have 30 days to submit a letter to DCEO requesting a formal hearing, which is conducted by a state hearing officer. During this hearing you have the right to:

- Be represented or bring to the conference a representative of your choice;
- Present oral and written statements and other evidence;
- Cross-examine witnesses; and/or
- Bring an interpreter, if needed.

This testimony will be recorded and a written decision will be based on the record

The hearing must take place within 30 days of the date of your letter, and a written decision must be made within 10 days of the hearing. If you are not satisfied with the hearing decision, you have 35 days to bring a lawsuit to have that decision reviewed by a judge.

## **Moving Out**

Here are some important steps for when you are ready to move out of your rental house or apartment.

1. **Cancel your utilities.** For more information on this see *Utilities -- an Overview* on page 46. If it is winter and you are canceling the service that provides the heat, it is important to be certain your landlord knows that you are cancelling the service so that the landlord can make sure that the pipes do not freeze, burst and damage the property. If you do not notify the landlord, you risk the landlord claiming that you were responsible for the damage.
2. **Leave an address where you can be reached** with the post office, utility companies, and your landlord. The address you give the landlord can be a mailing address, rather than the place you are living.
3. **Clean your apartment.** Check the lease and additional rules to determine if you must shampoo the carpet, defrost the refrigerator, clean the stove, etc. Remove all food, furniture, possessions and garbage from the unit to avoid any charges.
4. **Arrange for a time for you and your landlord to check the conditions of the apartment together**, if at all possible. Be sure to have the apartment's condition put in writing before you leave. Use the *Move-In/Move-Out Checklist* on page 77. Have it signed and dated by the landlord. If the landlord will not sign the checklist, ask a witness to look at the unit and sign the checklist; it is best if the witness is someone uninterested; that is, not a relative or a close friend. Take pictures or videotape the apartment if you are worried about getting your security deposit back or afraid of being held liable for damages to the apartment that you did not cause. Do not sign anything given by the landlord, manager, or maintenance workers related to cleaning, damages, or repairs needed unless you agree to be charged full price for the work. Be especially wary of landlords or their employees asking you to sign documents that do not say how much the cleaning or repairs will cost. For more information, see *Problems with Deposits and How to Prevent Them* on page 33.
5. **Return all keys to the doors, mailbox, and storage area.** This will avoid having money subtracted from your deposit and it also will also protect the security and safety of the next tenants who move into your apartment.



## **Ending the Landlord Tenant Relationship**

### **How to Get Out of Your Lease**

Your lease is a contract, and when you signed it you agreed to pay rent for the full term of the lease whether or not you continue to live in the apartment. Know how long your lease runs. It may be a six- or 12-month lease even though you pay rent every 30 days. If you do not pay the rent as it comes due, then the landlord can sue you, collect the money you owe, and evict you.

Except for victims of domestic or sexual violence protected by the Illinois Safe Homes Act (see page 39), there generally are only two ways to break your lease and end your duty to pay rent. One way is to get the landlord to agree to let you out. The other way is to find someone else to take over your lease. When someone else takes over your lease, it is called subletting, assigning or transferring your lease.

### **Consent of the Landlord**

The easiest way for you to get out of your lease is if your landlord agrees, but your landlord does not have to agree. If you do get your landlord to agree to let you out of your lease, get it in writing. Otherwise, you could be faced with a lawsuit for non-payment of rent even though he or she told you it was okay to move out.

The exact wording of an agreement by your landlord to let you out of your lease is important to make sure you are completely released from claims that the landlord can make against you for additional rent. The agreement should end both the lease and the tenancy, and should be clear that you do not owe additional rent. For example, the agreement might say something like this: "John Jones, Landlord, and Robert Johnson, Tenant, hereby agree to end their lease for 1234 Main Street, Elgin, Illinois. That lease was dated October 1, 2015 and we now agree the lease ends on May 31, 2016. Both the lease and Johnson's tenancy end on May 31, 2016. Johnson has paid his rent through May 2016 and does not and will not owe additional rent for months after May 2016." If the landlord will also agree to include a statement that he or she will return your security deposit, add that as well. The agreement should include signature lines for you and for your landlord and also dates for your signatures.

Make sure you have a copy of the agreement, and that your copy includes your landlord's signature. Simply writing "void" on a lease or tearing up your copy is not enough because your landlord could always produce a copy of the original, claiming that you ended the lease without his or her consent.

### **Sublet, Assign or Transfer**

If your landlord is reluctant to let you out of your lease, he or she may be more likely to do so if you can provide another person to take over your lease, including paying the rent and doing any other things the lease requires. Look at the lease to see if there is a provision allowing you to do this, and follow the procedures in the lease exactly. This is called subletting, assigning or transferring. Although there are confusing differences between subletting, assigning, and transferring a lease, for most purposes, these are the rules:

1. You will need your landlord's permission. Many leases state that you cannot sublet, assign or transfer your lease without written permission from the landlord. The landlord does not have to agree.

2. Whether it is called a sublease, assignment or transfer, get it in writing. Make sure the agreement is signed and dated by your landlord, yourself, and the new tenant. Be sure to keep a copy of it.
3. You are probably still responsible for the rent. Even though another person has agreed to take over your lease, he or she may agree to pay less rent than you did. If this is the case, make sure you are aware of it and that you pay the difference between what you originally agreed to pay and what the new tenant is paying.
4. You are probably still liable for the total rent during the term of your original lease if the new tenant does not pay. The landlord can sue either you or the new tenant, whomever the landlord chooses.

As a general rule, be cautious when you choose someone to take over your lease. Some basic tips are:

1. Check the lease to be sure you can sublet, assign or transfer your apartment and get permission, in writing, from your landlord if required. Remember, your landlord does not have to allow you to do this.
2. Try to get someone you know to take the apartment.
3. If you cannot find someone you know to take your apartment, ask your landlord if he or she knows of anyone who would be interested in taking the apartment.
4. If neither you nor your landlord know of anyone, ask friends or relatives if they know someone they trust who can take over the apartment.
5. You can put up notices around town in stores, laundromats, etc., or put an ad in a newspaper or on social media. However, be very careful. If the person who takes over your lease is not trustworthy, or worse, damages the apartment, you could find yourself in more financial trouble than if you had just stayed in the apartment and tightened your budget to pay the rent.

When you move out, follow the check-out procedures in the *Move-In/Move-Out Checklist* (page 77) and the section of this handbook on *Damage and Security Deposits* on page 33 to make sure you will only be charged for the damages done while you were living there.

### **Ending an Oral Lease**

If you have an oral lease and you want to move, you must give your landlord a full rental period's notice in writing. This means that if you pay rent weekly, you must give your landlord seven days' written notice of your intent to move. If you pay rent monthly, or on another schedule such as every two weeks, then you must give at least 30 days' written notice. To give a proper 30 days' notice, you must provide your notice to the landlord on the first day of the rental period for months with 31 days, and before the first day of the rental period for months with 30 days. The rental period begins when your rent is due.

For example: You have an oral lease and you pay rent on the first day of every month. You want to move out on August 31. You must give your landlord written notice no later than August 1. You could not give notice on August 15 to move on August 31 because August 15 is in the middle of your rental period and it does not provide your landlord with a full 30 days' notice. If you did not give notice until August 15, you would still be liable for rent through September 30. Remember that some months have



only 30 days. For example, if you want to end your lease at the end of November, you would need to give notice on or before October 31, in order to give the landlord the full 30 days' notice.

If you do not give enough written notice, you may end up owing an additional month's rent or losing your security deposit. To avoid additional charges, send a signed, dated 30 day notice to your landlord by registered or certified mail, or deliver it in person in the presence of a witness. Always keep a copy of the notice for your own records. Remember that your landlord is entitled to the full 30 day notice; it is not enough to mail the notice 30 days ahead; you must be sure that the landlord receives it 30 days before you want the oral lease to end.

If your landlord wants you to move, he or she must give you written notice following the same rules described above. If you have an oral lease, the landlord does not need a reason to end the lease. The landlord can end the lease for any reason as long as it is not a discriminatory reason. The notice the landlord gives you does not have to be notarized or delivered by the sheriff, but it should be signed and dated. If you do not move out by the date specified in the notice, your landlord may file a lawsuit in court to have you evicted. For more information on this process, see the section below titled *Eviction*.

### **Other Possibilities**

There are certain situations in which you may be able to break your lease without your landlord's consent. If the house or apartment does not comply with the state or local building codes, housing codes, health requirements, or zoning ordinances, a health or safety hazard may exist. In some cases, the landlord may not legally rent the apartment. If such a situation exists, you should notify the appropriate officials (for example health department, city inspectors, or housing code enforcement). Do not move out because of hazardous conditions without first talking with an attorney. A housing code violation by itself is not necessarily grounds for breaking a lease. Inspectors are very overworked and do not appreciate being called in to inspect your house or apartment when your only motive is breaking the lease rather than health and safety.

You may also have a case for moving out if your lease allows subletting but you have tried to sublet, assign, or transfer your lease several times and the landlord has refused to rent to the new tenants for no apparent reason. In this situation, be sure to get the names, addresses and phone numbers of every person whom your landlord turned down. Again, talk with an attorney before you move.

## **Eviction**

Eviction is the way a landlord removes a tenant from the premises after the lease (oral or written) has been ended properly. The violation of any clause in a lease by a tenant may give a landlord a reason to evict a tenant. Examples are: if a tenant fails to pay rent within five days after it is due; if a tenant keeps a pet and there is a no-pet clause or agreement; if a tenant makes too much noise and there is a no-noise clause.

### **Notice and Court Proceedings**

The following are the steps a landlord must take in order to legally evict you. **YOU CAN ONLY BE EVICTED BY COURT ORDER** as described below. If the landlord does not follow this procedure, the eviction is illegal. If you are the victim of an illegal eviction, call an attorney. If your immediate safety or the immediate safety of your property is threatened, call the police.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you live in public housing, Section 8 housing, or any other subsidized housing there may be different rules and laws that apply to you. You may be able to ask for an informal or formal hearing before an eviction goes to court depending on the type of housing. See page 45 for more information.

Here are the steps for an eviction if you live in private housing:

1. **Written notice from the landlord.** Your landlord must serve you with a written notice stating that he or she wants you out by a definite or specific date. The notice must be dated and signed by the landlord, but it does not have to be notarized or delivered by a sheriff. The notice can be sent to you the notice by registered or certified mail, or it can be handed in person to you or to any person 13 or older who lives in the premises. Generally, posting the notice on the door or leaving it inside the premises is not proper. There are three different types of notices, depending on the reason for ending the lease:
  - a. For non-payment of rent, the landlord must give the tenant at least five days' notice. The notice cannot be served until the day after the rent is due. You must pay the rent due within five days after the day you receive the notice. If you do not pay within those five days, the lease is ended.
  - b. For any other breach of the lease except specific drug and criminal activity, the landlord must give you at least 10 days' notice, stating why he or she wants you out.
  - c. If you have an oral lease, the landlord may end the lease for no reason at all (except for a discriminatory reason) with written notice. The number of days' notice the landlord must give you depends on if you pay rent month-to-month, week-to-week, or otherwise. See *Ending an Oral Lease* on page 64. Even though the landlord can end an oral lease without a reason, he or she cannot evict you for a discriminatory reason or in retaliation for a complaint to the housing code enforcement department. For more specific information on this, see *Discrimination and Housing* on page 11 and *Acting on Possible Housing Code Violations* on page 28.
2. **Speak with an attorney.** If your landlord serves you with a notice that he or she is ending your tenancy, talk with a lawyer as soon as possible. There is information about how to contact Prairie State Legal Services and other free legal aid programs at the end of this handbook.
3. **Payment in full to stop the eviction.** In the case of a five-day notice for non-payment of rent, if you pay all of the rent within the five days, your landlord can take no further action against

you and you can stay. Be sure to get a receipt; if you think the landlord will refuse to take the money or to give you a receipt, bring a witness with you when you pay. If you do not pay the rent in full within the five days, your landlord can take the money later and evict you, or refuse the money later and evict you.

4. **What you can do if the eviction is for a lease violation.** If you are being evicted for some breach of the lease other than nonpayment, the landlord does not have to accept any promise or solution; he or she can evict you unless you have a good defense to the claim that you breached your lease. Continue to pay your rent and get receipts, even though you have received a notice terminating your tenancy for breach of the lease. This may help you convince a judge that the landlord has acted contrary to the notice of termination and that you should be able to stay. If the landlord does not accept your rent, it is smart to save it so that if you win the eviction case you will be able to pay the rent you owe; otherwise, you might win the lease violation case and later be evicted for non-payment of rent.
5. **If you are disabled.** If the reason you are being evicted is connected to a disability, you may be able to prevent the eviction by requesting a reasonable accommodation. For more information on this, see *Discrimination and Housing* on page 11 and speak with a lawyer.
6. **What happens when the time in the landlord's notice ends.** If you have not left the premises by the time stated in the notice, the landlord must take you to court. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LEAVE THE PREMISES UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN TO COURT AND A JUDGE TELLS YOU TO LEAVE BY COURT ORDER.**
7. **Landlord files an eviction case in court.** Next your landlord now must file suit against you. The sheriff or a special process server will give you a summons, which will state the time and date that you will have to go to court for a hearing. The summons also may be served on someone else who is at least 13 years old and resides in the premises. If you did not talk to a lawyer when you received the notice of termination of tenancy, try to talk to a lawyer as soon as possible.
8. **Go to court and ask for a trial.** It is important that you go to court at the time and on the date on the papers you were served with. If you do not appear in court the judge will enter a default judgment, which means that you will be evicted and owe whatever money the landlord is claiming. You have the right to have an attorney represent you in court, but the court will not appoint an attorney for you. If you do have an attorney, the attorney will do the things explained here for you. File an appearance (not required in every county) and an Application for Waiver of Court Fees, asking the court to excuse your filing fees. If you disagree with the reason for the eviction, or if you disagree with the amount that the landlord says you owe, tell the judge that you want a trial. Even if you have moved out by the time of the court hearing, you should go to court to make sure the amount of money the landlord tells the judge you owe is correct. Even if you plan to move, it is smart to go to court so that you can ask for more time to move out. The judge does not have to give you more time, but he or she may give you anywhere from a few days to a week or two weeks to move.
9. **The case will be set for trial.** Depending on which county you live in, your trial might take place on your first court date or the trial may be set for some time later, often one week later. It is best to bring all of your witnesses and evidence (for example: rent receipts, pictures of damages, police reports, etc.) to your first court date.
10. **Trial.** At the court hearing, you and your landlord each will have an opportunity to tell your story. Be prepared to have any receipts, documents, or witnesses with you to help convince the

judge. The judge will then decide whether you violated your lease. If the judge decides in your favor, you will be able to stay. If the judge decides in favor of the landlord, he or she can order you to be out that same day. This is unusual; most judges will give you a short period of time to move out. **UNDER ILLINOIS LAW, HARDSHIP IS NOT A DEFENSE.** For example, if it is winter or you are pregnant, the judge still will order you to move.

11. **Court order.** Once the judge makes his or her decision, the judge will ask someone, usually the landlord's lawyer, to write an order for the judge to sign. Do not leave court until you have seen the order. Get a copy of the order and keep the copy. If the judge has decided that you must leave the house or apartment, the order will say how long you have to remain before you must move out. Usually this is written in an order as "possession is stayed until [specific date, for example June 1]." This means that you have until that date to move out.
12. **Removal from the premises.** If you do not move out by the date in the court order, the landlord will contact the sheriff to schedule the eviction. You can find out the date that the sheriff plans to do the eviction by calling the sheriff's office. The sheriff will supervise the landlord and the landlord's workers; they can, and will, move you and your property out on the front lawn.



### **Lock-outs and Changing Locks**

Lock-outs, changing locks, utility shutoffs, and using force to remove you from the premises are always illegal. Your landlord must give you notice and take you to court in order to evict you. If he or she attempts some type of force to get you to leave, call the police and an attorney.

### **Liability for Rent**

Just because your landlord is trying to evict you does not mean you do not have to pay rent. You are liable for rent every day you are in the premises, whether you win or lose the eviction case in court. Hold onto your rental payment during court proceedings since eventually you will need to pay your landlord the rent that is due. Even if you are evicted, after you move out you may be liable for rent for the remaining time on the lease until a new tenant moves in.

### **Seizure of Property**

In general, your landlord cannot take any of your personal belongings as a means to get you to move out of the premises. However, if you owe your landlord rent, he can seize your property provided that he or she immediately files a lawsuit against you, listing all the property he or she has taken. In most cases, the landlord who seizes a tenant's property fails to file suit against the tenant which means the seizure is illegal and the landlord may be liable to the tenant for damages. In addition, some property is exempt or protected by law, including \$4,000 in value of any property; if the landlord takes this property, he or she may be liable for twice the value of the property taken. If you experience a problem with seizure of your property, contact an attorney.

### **Retaliatory Eviction**

Your landlord cannot evict you for complaining to a government authority such as your local housing code enforcement department about a legitimate housing code violation. If you receive an eviction notice after making a complaint, seek legal help to be sure of your rights. For more information on this, see *Acting on Possible Housing Code Violations* on page 28.

## Small Claims

Small claims court is a court where the judge hears claims for money in amounts less than \$10,000. The purpose of small claims court is to give people an opportunity to sue someone or defend themselves without having to be represented by an attorney, using simplified court rules and procedures. Although you may hire an attorney for small claims court, you do not have to have one.

In some counties, the same judge hears eviction cases and small claims cases. However, the procedures for the two types of cases are not identical. Small claims cases are lawsuits for money only. Evictions are not small claims cases and do not follow the small claims court rules. Some common small claims are suits brought by landlords against tenants for back rent or damage to a unit, and suits by tenants against landlords for seizing the tenant's property or failing to return a security deposit.

The person bringing the suit is the *plaintiff*. The person being sued is the *defendant*. To file a suit, the plaintiff must go to the small claims clerk at the courthouse and ask for a complaint form, or find a form online. This is usually a fill-in-the-blank form. Many courthouses have either a self-help center or a small claims help desk to assist with finding the form complaint and/or filling it out. The self-help center or help desk also should be able to help you with other forms you will need.

On the complaint form, you will put your name and address, the name and address of the defendant, how much money you are suing for, and a brief description of why you are suing the defendant (for example, "I paid a security deposit of \$500.00 on June 1, 2015; the landlord refused to return my deposit when I moved out."). A small claims case you can only ask the judge to enter a money judgment against the defendant. The small claims judge does not have the power to order the defendant to *do* something, such as return property which he or she took. Therefore, if you are suing in small claims court because your landlord seized your belongings, you can only sue for the value of the items. This may cause the landlord to return the items to you but the judge cannot order him or her to do so; the judge can only enter a judgment for the value of the property. If you believe the landlord still has the items and you want them returned, it is best to see a lawyer who can file the proper lawsuit rather than a small claims suit.

There are filing and service fees required to bring a small claims suit. If you want to file a small claims case but you have limited income and cannot afford to pay a filing fee, you can file an Application for Waiver of Court Fees. You need to supply financial information on this form. The clerk should allow you to file the case once you turn in the Application for Waiver of Court Fees, but you may have to pay the fee later. A judge will review your Application and enter an order that will either allow or reject your petition to file the case without paying filing fees. If the judge denies the Application, you usually will have a certain period of time to pay the fee. If you are sued in small claims court, you can use this same form to ask the judge to excuse you from paying the filing fee for defending the case.

When you turn in your form, the staff at the Circuit Clerk's office will set a date and time for the judge to hear the case. Then the complaint and summons must be served on the defendant. The small claims court rules allow the complaint and summons to be served by certified or registered mail, restricted delivery. If the defendant does not sign for the mail then service will need to be made in person. This is done through the county sheriff's office. The clerk generally will help you send copies of the complaint and summons to the sheriff for service.



At the date and time on the summons, both the plaintiff and the defendant should show up at the small claims courtroom. If the defendant shows up but the plaintiff does not, the judge will dismiss and the defendant will not have to pay anything. If the plaintiff shows up but the defendant does not, then the defendant will lose by default and probably will have to pay whatever the plaintiff claims the defendant owes. If neither the plaintiff nor the defendant shows up, the judge will dismiss the case.

Assuming you are the one who filed the suit, if both you and the defendant show up, the judge may hear the case that day or the judge may set a date for you to return for the trial. At the trial, you must explain to the judge why you are suing the defendant. You must state exactly how much money the defendant owes you, and you must bring any documents or witnesses you have to support your story. After you and any other witnesses you bring have testified, the defendant will be allowed to "cross-examine" you or your other witness, which means he or she will be able to ask the witness questions as well.

The defendant then must explain to the judge why he or she does not owe you what you claim. The defendant must bring any documents or witnesses he or she has to support his or her story. After the defendant and his or her other witnesses have testified, you will be allowed to "cross-examine" the defendant or other witness. (If you are the defendant rather than the one who brings the lawsuit, you will have these same rights.)

After this, the judge then decides who wins and how much, if anything, the defendant must pay. The judge will ask one of the plaintiff or defendant to write an order with the judge's decision including the amount of money, and the judge will sign the order. If the judge finds the defendant must pay, the defendant does not have to pay that day. In fact, if the defendant refuses to pay, you probably will need to take the defendant to court again at another time to get him or her to pay.

There are a variety of ways to legally collect a judgment, but you should consult an attorney if you are having trouble doing so. Some methods are locating and freezing bank accounts, garnishing wages, and obtaining liens against property. Be aware that if your landlord obtains a judgment against you in small claims court, he or she can use these and other methods to collect from you. If you have questions about small claims court, contact the small claims clerk, the self-help center at the courthouse, or the small claims help desk. If the case is complicated or if you are unsure of what to do, see an attorney.

## **What Happens When Your Landlord is in Foreclosure**

Foreclosures in Illinois grew by a large number beginning in 2007. Many tenants were surprised to find out that the houses or apartments they were renting were being foreclosed and tenants often had to leave their homes with very little notice. State and federal laws were passed to give some protections to tenants whose landlords lost rental properties to foreclosure; however the federal law ("Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act" or "PTFA") expired on December 31, 2014. Congress is considering reviving these laws, but has not yet done so as of the printing date of this handbook. Therefore, this handbook is based only on Illinois state laws as of May 2016. This is an area of the law that is changing often. If you learn that your landlord is in foreclosure, you should check for current information and updates about the rights of tenants in foreclosure.

### **Checking Into Foreclosure before You Rent**

Renting a property that is in foreclosure may not be a good idea, and it is something you will want to think about before signing a lease. One of the problems with renting a house or apartment which is in foreclosure is that foreclosure almost certainly means that the landlord is having financial difficulties. The same problems which are preventing the landlord from paying the mortgage are also likely to prevent the landlord from keeping the property in good repair, or possibly even from paying utilities if the lease says they are the landlord's responsibility. These financial problems may also make it difficult to recover your security deposit from the landlord when you move out.

Unfortunately, there is no easy way to find out whether a landlord is behind on mortgage payments before a foreclosure case has been filed in court. It is NOT illegal for a landlord to rent out a property that is in foreclosure, and your landlord is NOT required to tell you that the property is in foreclosure. If you ask a landlord if mortgage payments are current or if the property is in foreclosure, your landlord should not lie to you, although it can be difficult to do anything about it if he or she does lie.

For these reasons, it is always a good idea to do a quick check to learn whether the property you are considering renting is in foreclosure – that is, whether a foreclosure case has been filed in court. Two ways to do this are through the Recorder of Deeds and through the Clerk of the Circuit Court for the county where the rental property is located. All Circuit Court foreclosure lawsuits and all records at the Recorder of Deeds are open to the public. In some counties, you may be able to check the Clerk of the Circuit Court or Recorder of Deeds information online. If you need help searching the records, it may be easier to go in person so that staff at the office can help you.

Through the Recorder of Deeds, you can usually search the county's property records by address. This will help you identify the names of all property owners so that you can check the Clerk of the Circuit Court records for foreclosure cases filed against those names. Also, when a mortgage company files a foreclosure lawsuit, it often files a public notice of the foreclosure (called a *lis pendens*) with the Recorder of Deeds. There is no requirement that a *lis pendens* be filed with the Recorder, so the fact that you do not find one will NOT guarantee that no foreclosure lawsuit has been filed.

Through the Clerk of the Circuit Court, you can search for any lawsuits which name the landlord or any other owner of the property. Be sure to also search the landlord's name and his or her business name(s) if there are any. If you find any lawsuits against your landlord or other owners, you can ask the staff at the clerk's office to show you the court files so you can find out whether they are foreclosure cases on the property you are looking to rent.

## **The Foreclosure Process in Illinois: Figuring out Where the Landlord is in the Process**

To understand the rights of tenants whose landlords are in foreclosure, it is important to know a little about the foreclosure process in Illinois. If property which you own is in foreclosure, it is important to get more detailed information than is provided here, but the information here will help you understand your rights if your landlord is foreclosed.

The court foreclosure process usually takes at least nine months, and in many cases can take much longer. A tenant has the right to stay in the unit throughout the foreclosure case as long as he or she remains in compliance with the terms of his or her lease, *which includes continuing to pay rent to the current owner*. The bank or lender begins a foreclosure by filing a complaint in court stating that the mortgage borrower is behind in payments and that the bank seeks to foreclose. The law does not require the landlord to notify his or her tenants, nor is the lender required to provide notice to any tenant unless the lender names the tenant as a defendant in the lawsuit. The law says that the lender may include tenants as defendants in a foreclosure, but the lender is not required to include tenants and in fact most lenders do not. Naming a tenant as a defendant does not make the tenant responsible for the mortgage payments.

If the lender proves to the court that it has the right to foreclose, the court will enter a Judgment of Foreclosure. The property can be sold at a foreclosure auction three months after the Judgment is entered (a little longer in some circumstances) unless the landlord refinances or pays off the mortgage, gets caught up on the payments, sells the property, or gets approved for a loan modification. Shortly after the sale takes place, the lender must go back to court to ask the judge to "confirm" the sale. When the judge enters the order confirming the sale the foreclosure is complete and the deed to the property may be transferred to whoever purchased it at the foreclosure sale.

Even when the court enters a judgment, the property is sold, and the court confirms the sale, a tenant is not required to move yet. A tenant has the right to stay in the property throughout the foreclosure case as long as he or she remains in compliance with the terms of his or her lease, which includes continuing to pay rent. The next section discusses when a tenant must move out after a foreclosure sale is confirmed.

Note that in some cases, the foreclosure can move more quickly than the timeline set out here, and in other cases it can take much longer. The only way to know how quickly the case is moving is to check the court file from time to time. Court files are public record and you have the right to see the file if you go to the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Many courts offer limited information on the status of cases for free online. Check with the court or its website for more information on accessing case information online.

### **How Long the Tenant May Continue to Rent a Property after Foreclosure**

State and federal laws protecting tenants in foreclosure have been changing, and the answer to the question of how long a tenant may continue to rent a foreclosed property is complicated. You may wish to speak with an attorney to determine the correct rules and exceptions that govern the exact length of time that applies to your lease. Illinois state law requires new owners who buy property at a foreclosure auction to honor most existing leases. In most cases, the law also requires landlords to provide written notice to tenants before they can be required to move. Only a court can order a tenant to move. As a reminder, this manual is based only on Illinois state laws as of May 2016.



### *If you have a "bona fide" lease*

The length of time a tenant may continue to rent a foreclosed property varies depending on a number of factors, most importantly whether there is an existing lease which meets the law's definition of a *bona fide* lease. A lease may not be bona fide if:

1. The tenant is the landlord's spouse, parent, or child;
2. The amount charged for rent is substantially less than fair market rent (unless it is subsidized);
3. The lease was not an arm's length business transaction -- for example, it has unusually friendly terms for the tenant that would not be normal in the general rental market; or
4. The lease was entered into after the property was sold at a foreclosure auction.

Most tenants have *bona fide* leases. If the new owner wants to evict a tenant with a *bona fide* lease, the new owner must give the tenant 90 days written notice to vacate after the sale is confirmed, even if the lease is only month-to-month or week-to-week, or if the lease was set to expire in less than 90 days. If the lease was not set to expire within that 90 days, the tenant has the right to stay for the full term of the lease, and the landlord must still provide at least 90 day notice to terminate the tenancy. The new owner can time the 90 day notice so that the 90 days end at the same time as the lease ends; he does not have to wait for the lease to expire to give the 90 day notice. There is an exception to this rule if the new owner plans to move into the property. A new owner who plans to move in is not required to let the tenant stay through the end of the lease but the new owner must still provide at least 90 days' notice.

A note about oral leases: as explained on page 18, an oral lease is still a lease. Because it can be hard to prove the terms of an oral lease, it may be difficult to prove the length of the lease if it is for a specific period of time such as six months, and not just month-to-month. If you have an oral lease you may have to fall back on the 90 day notice rule, which still applies even if your lease is treated as month-to-month, so long as it otherwise meets the requirements of a *bona fide* lease.

### *If you do not have a bona fide lease*

If your lease is not a bona fide lease, then your timeframe to stay in the property depends on the method the landlord uses to obtain a court order requiring you to leave. See the next section, *Steps the New Owner May Take to Remove a Tenant*, for a description of each of these methods with applicable timeframes.

### **Steps the New Owner May Take to Remove a Tenant**

Illinois law sets out three different court procedures that a new owner can use to remove a tenant after the sale is confirmed. Remember that you always have the right to stay in the property until a judge enters an order requiring you to move. The three court procedures for removing tenants are:

1. The lender may specifically list you by name as a defendant in the foreclosure case and serve you with a summons. If you are a defendant in the foreclosure, the court will enter an order telling you when you need to move at the same time that it confirms the foreclosure sale at the last court date in the foreclosure case. If you have a *bona fide* lease, the judge's order should comply with your rights and timeframes as a tenant described above; you should be entitled to at least 90 days, and unless the new owner plans to move in, to stay for the length of your lease

if more than 90 days. If you do not have a *bona fide* lease, you should be given at least 30 days. Most lenders list “unknown occupants” as defendants in a foreclosure but the court can only evict you through the order confirming the sale if you are actually listed by name as a defendant and if you were served with summons.

2. The new owner may file a written request called a Supplemental Petition in the foreclosure case, asking the judge to order you to leave within 120 days from when the Supplemental Petition was served on you, or at the end of your lease, whichever is *shorter*. In either event, you should be given at least 30 days from the date the order is entered. This Supplemental Petition cannot be used unless it is filed within 90 days after the foreclosure sale is confirmed. A Supplemental Petition cannot be used to terminate a lease that meets the requirements of a *bona fide* lease (see above).
3. The new owner may file a separate court case outside of foreclosure court to evict you. However, the new owner cannot evict a tenant with a *bona fide* lease until the lease expires and the new owner gives at least 90 days’ notice. The new owner must wait until the end of the 90 days to file the eviction. The new owner can always file an eviction without waiting if he has valid grounds outside of the foreclosure case to evict you, such as non-payment of rent or another breach of the lease.

If the landlord uses a Supplemental Petition or separate eviction case to evict you due to the foreclosure, you should ask the judge to seal the court file so that it will not be available to the public where it could potentially harm your ability to rent in the future.

### **Paying Rent During and After a Foreclosure**

“Do I have to pay my rent if my landlord is in foreclosure?” This is a very common question asked by tenants. The answer to the question is “yes.” As a tenant, your right to stay in the property before, during, and after foreclosure depends on your paying the rent and abiding by all the terms of your lease.

This leads to the next question: whom do I pay? In general, you should pay your rent to your original landlord until the date the court confirms the foreclosure sale. It is always important to get and keep rent receipts, but it is particularly important to do so when there is a foreclosure because there may be a change in ownership of the property and there may be questions of whether you have the right to stay in your house or apartment.

In some cases, a lender may ask the court to be “placed in possession” early in the court case. This might happen, for example, if the landlord is not taking good care of the property. If the court agrees that the lender is entitled to possession of the property, the lender will then have the right to collect the rent. If that doesn’t happen with court approval earlier in the foreclosure process, the court will enter this order of possession when it confirms the sale. The new owner is required to try to find out who all of the tenants are. The new owner must then give a very specific written notice letting you know who the new owner is, where to call if you have questions or need repairs, and where to pay rent. This notice must also be posted on the main entrance to the building. The notice should include the court case number so that you can check the court file to see what has happened in the court case.

After the sale is confirmed, your original landlord no longer owns the property and no longer has the right to collect rent. Whoever purchased the property at the sheriff’s sale has the right to collect rent as the new owner from that point forward. The new owner must give a very specific written notice to the



tenants about the change in ownership. The notice is supposed to be given within 21 days of the confirmation, but even if it is given later, the tenant will still owe back rent for all of the time the tenant lived in the unit, including the time between the confirmation of sale and when the tenant got the notice. Once the notice has been given, you can be evicted for not paying rent, including back-rent owed from before the notice was given. If you are not sure to whom to pay rent, it is very important that you save the rent money, so that you will have the money ready when you get proper notice of whom to pay.

### **Moving Assistance**

You may be able to negotiate with the new owner for assistance to help pay your moving costs and the up-front costs of signing a new lease somewhere else. This is sometimes called "relocation assistance" or "cash for keys." Although you have the right to stay for the time periods described above, the new owner of the property (oftentimes the bank) most likely wants you to move. If the new owner of the property wants you to move and you are willing to leave early, you may be able to negotiate an agreement with the new owner to pay you to move sooner than you are otherwise required. Contact the new owner or the new owner's attorney to start negotiations. Be sure to get any agreements in writing.

### **Return of Security Deposit after Foreclosure**

In cases where the foreclosing lender becomes the new owner of the property, the old landlord is liable for the return of your security deposit unless the security deposit is actually transferred to the foreclosing lender, in which case the lender then becomes liable to return it. Within 21 days of the transfer, the new owner is required to post a written notice on the primary entrance to each unit in the building notifying its residents that the security deposit has been transferred.

For real estate with five or more units, the court should enter an order at the confirmation hearing requiring the foreclosed owner to transfer any security deposits to the new owner along with an accounting and the name and address of each tenant for whom a security deposit is held.

In cases where a third party who is not the foreclosing bank becomes the new owner of the property, then both the old owner and the new owner are liable to you for the return of your security deposit and you may choose to seek recovery from either of them.

In any scenario, if you are having trouble recovering your security deposit, for example if the old owner and new owner each claim the other is responsible for returning it, it may be necessary to sue them both in small claims court and let the court determine the outcome.

## Move-In/Move-Out Checklist

**How to use this checklist:** Go through the house or apartment on your own or with your landlord when you move in. In the left column, note any problem or write "good" or "o.k." if there is no problem. If you fill out the checklist on your own, ask your landlord to go through the house or apartment with you to review the problems you noted. Make sure both you and the landlord sign and date the form and initial each page; make sure that you get either the original or a copy. If the landlord will not agree, you can bring a witness to go through the house or apartment, and be sure to take photos of any problems. You can use the form again when you move out.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord: \_\_\_\_\_ Tenant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Moved In \_\_\_\_\_

Date Moved Out \_\_\_\_\_

**Condition at  
move-in**

**Condition at  
move-out**

### ENTRY DOORS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Locks/keys  
Storm doors/screens  
Patio/balcony/deck  
Railing  
Other

NOTES:

### LIVING ROOM

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Door  
Walls/ceiling  
Windows/screens/sills  
Floor/tile/carpeting  
Light fixtures  
Switches  
Woodwork  
Curtains/curtain rods  
Closets  
Closet doors  
Other

NOTES:

### KITCHEN

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Door  
Walls/ceiling

## KITCHEN

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows/screens/sills  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Floor/tile/carpeting  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Light fixtures  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Switches  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Woodwork  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Curtains/curtain rods  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Closets  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Closet doors  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Refrigerator/freezer  
                     Ice trays  
                     Shelves  
                     Drawers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Stove  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Oven  
                     Racks  
                     Broiler  
                     Broiler pan  
                     Hood and fan  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Garbage disposal  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sink  
                     Faucets  
                     Drain  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Counter  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Cabinets  
                     Drawers  
                     Doors  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**NOTES:**

## HALL/STAIRS

\_\_\_\_\_ Door  
\_\_\_\_\_ Walls/ceiling  
\_\_\_\_\_ Windows/screens/sills  
\_\_\_\_\_ Floor/tile/carpeting  
\_\_\_\_\_ Light fixtures  
\_\_\_\_\_ Switches  
\_\_\_\_\_ Woodwork  
\_\_\_\_\_ Curtains/curtain rods  
\_\_\_\_\_ Closets  
\_\_\_\_\_ Closet doors  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**NOTES:**

**Condition at  
move-in**

**Condition at  
move-out**

**BATHROOM**

_____	_____ Door
_____	_____ Walls/ceiling
_____	_____ Windows/screens/sills
_____	_____ Floor/tile/carpeting
_____	_____ Light fixtures
_____	_____ Switches
_____	_____ Woodwork
_____	_____ Curtains/curtain rods
_____	_____ Closets
_____	_____ Closet doors
_____	_____ Sink
_____	_____ Faucets
_____	_____ Drain
_____	_____ Counter
_____	_____ Tub/shower
_____	_____ Faucets
_____	_____ Drain
_____	_____ Tile
_____	_____ Cabinet
_____	_____ Drawers
_____	_____ Doors
_____	_____ Mirror
_____	_____ Toilet
_____	_____ Flush
_____	_____ Fan
_____	_____ Towel holders
_____	_____ Tissue holder
_____	_____ Other
_____	_____ Other

NOTES:

**BEDROOM #1**

_____	_____ Door
_____	_____ Walls/ceiling
_____	_____ Windows/screens/sills
_____	_____ Floor/tile/carpeting
_____	_____ Light fixtures
_____	_____ Switches
_____	_____ Woodwork
_____	_____ Curtains/curtain rods
_____	_____ Closets

**Condition at  
move-in**

**Condition at  
move-out**

**BEDROOM #1**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Closet doors

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**BEDROOM #2**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Door

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Walls/ceiling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows/screens/sills

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Floor/tile/carpeting

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Light fixtures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Switches

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Woodwork

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Curtains/curtain rods

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Closets

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Closet doors

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**BEDROOM #3**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Door

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Walls/ceiling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows/screens/sills

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Floor/tile/carpeting

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Light fixtures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Switches

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Woodwork

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Curtains/curtain rods

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Closets

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Closet doors

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**HEAT AND MISCELLANEOUS**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Electric outlets

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Furnace/thermostat

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Air conditioning/thermostat

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Water heater

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Furniture supplied by landlord

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other



NOTES:

**Move-in:**

_____	_____	_____	_____
Renter	Date	Landlord	Date
_____	_____		
Witness	Date		

**Move-out:**

_____	_____	_____	_____
Renter	Date	Landlord	Date
_____	_____		
Witness	Date		

## Where to Get Help

### Making a Housing Discrimination Complaint

If you feel that you have been the victim of illegal housing discrimination, PSLS may be able to help you. Call the Fair Housing Project at 855/347-7757 or contact one of the agencies listed below.

Department of Housing and Urban Development Phone: 800/669-9777

Online: <https://portal.hud.gov/FHEO903/Form903/Form903Start.action>

Illinois Department of Human Rights Phone: 800/622-3942 or 312/814-6229

Online: <http://www2.illinois.gov/dhr/FilingCharge>

There may be a local human rights or fair housing commission in your city or county. Contact the county government or city hall to ask.

### Making a Complaint with the Illinois Commerce Commission

Phone: 800/524-0795

TTY: 800/858-9277

Online: <http://www.icc.illinois.gov/consumer/complaint/wizard.aspx>

### Need an Attorney and Can't Afford One?

Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. provides free legal help for people and groups who cannot afford legal fees.

Prairie State charges no fees except for court filing costs and litigation costs that are not waived by the court.

Prairie State does not handle every type of case. Below is a list of some of the types of cases that we may handle.

Landlord-Tenant	Fair housing/housing discrimination
Public or subsidized housing problems	Mortgage foreclosure
Special education	School discipline (suspensions and expulsions)
Welfare problems	General Assistance
Health benefits	Domestic violence
Elder abuse	Social Security and SSI
Food Stamps (SNAP)	Unemployment compensation
Utilities and utility terminations	Medicaid
Medicare	Nursing home problems
Hospital bills	Race discrimination
Tax controversies	

### Prairie State Cannot Handle Criminal Cases

This Handbook current as of August 2017

For information on changes in the law, visit [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org)

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**To be eligible for free legal help from Prairie State Legal Services, you must:**

- Meet certain income standards which are based on family size OR be eligible through our Senior Citizens Project or other special program; and,
- Live in one of the following counties:

Boone	Lee
Bureau	Livingston
Carroll	McDonough
DeKalb	McHenry
DuPage	Ogle
Fulton	Peoria
Grundy	Putnam
Henderson	Rock Island
Henry	Stark
Iroquois	Stephenson
Kankakee	Tazewell
Kendall	Warren
Knox	Whiteside
Lake	Will
LaSalle	

**How to Reach Prairie State Legal Services**

If you want to speak to an attorney about a legal problem or question, call the Prairie State office which serves the county where you live. The telephone numbers and other contact information for our local offices is located at the end of this handbook.

If you are 60 years old or older, you can apply for legal help and get legal advice by phone by calling our Older Adult Help Line at 888/965-7757.

If you have an income tax problem, you can contact our Low Income Tax Clinic directly at 855/TAX-PSLS or 855/829-7757.

If you have a mortgage foreclosure problem, you can contact our Legal Help for Homeowners Project directly at 888/966-7757.

If you have a fair housing problem, and you live in Lake, McHenry, Boone, Winnebago, Peoria or Tazewell County, you can contact our Fair Housing Project directly at 855/347-7757.

For some legal problems, you also can begin an application for legal help online at [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org).

**OFFICES OF PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES, INC.**

**BLOOMINGTON**

201 West Olive Street, #203  
Phone: 309/827-5021  
Toll Free: 800/874-2536  
Serving Livingston, McLean & Woodford

**DUPAGE (WHEATON)**

400 West Roosevelt Road  
Phone: 630/690-2130  
Toll Free: 800/690-2130  
Serving DuPage County

**FOX VALLEY (ST. CHARLES)**

1024 West Main Street  
Phone: 630/232-9415  
Toll Free: 800/942-4612  
Serving DeKalb, Kane & Kendall Counties

**GALESBURG**

311 East Main Street, #302  
Phone: 309/343-2141  
Toll Free: 800/331-0617  
Serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren Counties

**JOLIET**

5 West Jefferson Street, Lower Level  
Phone: 815/727-5123  
Serving Will and Grundy Counties

**KANKAKEE**

191 South Chicago Avenue  
Phone: 815/935-2750  
Toll Free: 800/346-2864  
Serving Kankakee & Iroquois Counties

**MCHENRY**

5320 West Elm Street  
Phone: 815/344-9113

Toll free: 877/480-3020  
Serving McHenry County

## **OTTAWA**

1021 Clinton Street  
Phone: 815/434-5903  
Toll Free: 800/892-7888  
Serving Bureau, LaSalle & Putnam Counties

## **PEORIA**

331 Fulton Street, #600  
Phone: 309/674-9831  
Toll Free: 800/322-2280  
TDD: 309/674-3811  
Serving Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Stark & Tazewell Counties

## **ROCK ISLAND**

1600 Fourth Avenue, #200  
Phone: 309/794-1328  
Toll Free: 800/322-9804  
Serving Rock Island, Henry, Lee, Mercer & Whiteside Counties

## **ROCKFORD**

303 North Main Street, #600  
Phone: 815/965-2902  
Toll Free: 800/892-2985  
Serving Boone, Carroll, JoDaviess, Ogle, Stephenson & Winnebago Counties

## **WAUKEGAN**

325 West Washington Street, #100  
Phone: 847/662-6925  
Toll Free: 800/942-3940  
Serving Lake County



## **OTHER SOURCES OF LEGAL HELP IN ILLINOIS**

**LAF (formerly, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago)**  
Phone: 312/341-1070  
Serves residents of Cook County

**CARPLS (Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal Services)**  
Phone: 312/738-9200  
Serves residents of Cook County

**Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation**  
Phone: 618/394-7300  
Toll free: 877/342-7891  
Serves residents of 65 counties in southern and central Illinois

**Illinois State Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service (charges a fee)**  
Phone: 217/525-5297  
Online: <http://ilf.isba.org/search.html>

## **LEGAL INFORMATION ON THE WEB:**

[www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org)

[www.pslegal.org](http://www.pslegal.org)

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2016

The information contained in this handbook is accurate at the time of the publication. This information is not meant to be legal advice or to replace the advice you should receive from an attorney. There are times when it would be smart to talk to a lawyer and other times when it is essential to get advice from a lawyer. Always remember, each individual case is unique. If you have additional questions or want legal advice, contact an attorney.

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[www.pslegal.org](http://www.pslegal.org)





## Landlord and Tenant Rights and Laws

There are many state laws and judicial decisions that give landlords and tenants specific legal rights and responsibilities. The purpose of this fact sheet is to give you general information on those rights and responsibilities. This fact sheet should not be used as the final source of information on landlord and tenant law. Consult your local municipality for ordinances regulating landlord and tenant rights. Also, this fact sheet does not pertain to you if you live in federally subsidized housing. Tenants living in subsidized housing have rights under federal law not covered here.

### Tenant's Rights and Responsibilities

- You should demand a written lease to avoid future misunderstandings with your landlord.
- You must pay your rent on time.
- You must keep the rental unit clean and undamaged.
- You are responsible for any damages beyond normal wear and tear.
- You must pay the utility bill if the lease makes you responsible.
- You may not alter the rental unit without your landlord's approval.
- You must give written notice when you intend to move if you don't want to lose your security deposit. Normally, a 30-day notice is sufficient, unless your lease requires a longer period.
- The Illinois Retaliatory Eviction Act prohibits your landlord from evicting you for complaining to any governmental authority (housing inspector, human rights commission, etc.).

### Landlord's Rights and Responsibilities

- Must keep the rental unit fit to live in.
- Must make all necessary repairs.
- Must keep the rental unit in compliance with state and local health and housing codes.
- May set the amount of rent and security deposit.
- May charge you a reasonable fee for late rent payments.
- May make reasonable rules and regulations.

### Security Deposits

Your landlord can require you to pay a security deposit that may be used to cover unpaid rent, repair damages to the unit and clean the unit after you move. The amount of the security deposit is normally equal to one month's rent; however, there is no legal limit on the amount your landlord can require.

#### *Interest on Your Security Deposit*

State law requires your landlord to pay you interest on your security deposit if it is held for at least six months and there are at least 25 units in your building or complex. Your landlord must pay you the interest or apply the interest as a credit to your rent every 12 months. You may sue your landlord for willfully failing to pay interest and recover an amount equal to your security deposit, court costs and attorney's fees.

#### *Return of Your Security Deposit*

The Illinois Security Deposit Return Act requires your landlord to return your security deposit in full within 45 days of the date you moved, if:

- Your building or complex consists of five or more units.
- You do not owe any back rent.
- You have not damaged the rental unit.
- You cleaned the apartment before you moved.

If your landlord refuses to return all or any portion of your security deposit, he/she must give you an itemized statement of the damages along with paid receipts within 30 days of the date you moved. You can sue your landlord to recover your security deposit. If a court finds that your landlord violated the security deposit law, he/she could be liable for damages in an amount equal to two times your security deposit, court costs and attorney's fees.

### **Rent Increases**

In a week-to-week or month-to-month tenancy, the landlord can raise your rent by any amount if he/she gives you seven days' notice for a week-to-week lease or 30 days' notice for a month-to-month lease. Your landlord cannot raise your rent if you have a fixed-term lease. In other words, if you have a year lease, your landlord cannot raise your rent prior to the expiration of the lease.

Illinois does not have a rent control law. Therefore, your landlord can raise your rent as much as he/she deems necessary. However, you should contact your local units of government to see if your city or county has a rent control ordinance.

### **Terminating a Lease**

Your landlord must notify you in writing that he/she intends to terminate the lease. If you are renting month-to-month, you are entitled to a 30-day written notice. Leases running year-to-year require a 60-day written notice. **YOUR LANDLORD DOES NOT HAVE TO GIVE YOU ANY REASON FOR TERMINATING THE LEASE.**

### **Illinois Rental Property Utility Service Act**

If your landlord has failed to pay a utility bill for which he/she is legally responsible, you may pay the bill and deduct the payment from your rent.

### **Discrimination**

A landlord may not refuse to rent or lease an apartment or house to potential tenants or have different rental terms on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex and marital status, or disability. Under the Federal Fair Housing Act, it is illegal to discriminate against families with children when leasing a rental unit. Complaints about discrimination may be filed with the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

### **The Eviction Process**

A landlord must file a lawsuit in order to evict you. Your landlord cannot make you move by turning off your utilities. Also, your landlord may not evict you by locking you out, changing the locks or removing your personal property from the rental unit. The eviction process is detailed below:

**Your landlord must give you a written notice stating the reason for the eviction. If the reason is for nonpayment, your landlord must give you five days to pay the rent. If the eviction is for violating a provision in the lease, your landlord must give you a 10-day notice.**

If you remain in the rental unit after the eviction notice, your landlord can file a lawsuit to evict you. The Illinois Forcible Entry and Detainer Act requires your landlord to serve you a summons and complaint. The summons will require you to appear in court. Go to court on the scheduled day. Remember, you have the right to:

- Have legal representation at your cost.
- Have a trial by jury.
- Present evidence.
- Call your own witnesses.
- Ask questions.

The burden of proof is on your landlord. The judge will make a decision. If you lose your case, the judge will order you to vacate the rental unit. However, the judge normally will give you some time to move. You have the right to appeal the decision. This must be done within 30 days after the trial. If you do not move out, your landlord may ask the Sheriff's office to physically evict you. **Remember, only a sheriff can physically evict you. It is illegal for a landlord to evict you by locking you out.**

### **Eviction Defenses**

You may be able to use the following defenses to stop an eviction or set off a claim for unpaid rent:

- You paid the rent during the 5-day notice period.
- Your landlord retaliated against you for filing a complaint with a governmental authority.
- You withheld a reasonable portion of your rent because your landlord failed to maintain the utilities (when it was the landlord's responsibility) or failed to make repairs after being given notice that they were needed.

### **If You Need Further Help**

If you have further questions about landlord and tenant law or a specific problem you may contact:

- Your attorney for legal advice.
- Legal aid services to determine if you are eligible for free legal services.
- The Illinois Lawyer Referral Service for the name and telephone number of a private attorney. The attorney will charge a moderate fee for an initial interview.
- The Illinois Department of Human Rights - Chicago: (312) 814-6200, TDD: (312) 263-1579; Springfield: (217) 785-5100, TDD: (217) 785-5125; Housing complaints: 1-800-662-3942.

For more information, please contact us.

**Chicago**  
100 W. Randolph Street  
Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 814-3000  
TTY: (800) 964-3013

**Springfield**  
500 S. Second Street  
Springfield, IL 62701  
(217) 782-1090  
TTY: (877) 844-5461

**Carbondale**  
601 S. University Avenue  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
(618) 529-6400/6401  
TTY: (877) 675-9339

Please visit [www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)







# ADDISON POLICE DEPARTMENT



DATE OF REQUEST \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE DUE \_\_\_\_\_

**(DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE - FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)** A.P.D. FOIA REQUEST NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

## Request for Public Records under the "Freedom of Information Act"

Requestor's Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to: Inspect Only

Mailing Address (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Receive Copy

(Circle ONE)

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Request: Private Commercial

(Circle ONE)

(Area Code) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ (BEST NUMBER TO REACH YOU)

**A PHOTO I.D. IS NEEDED FROM THE REQUESTING PARTY BEFORE A REPORT IS RELEASED**

(Area Code) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ (ALTERNATE NUMBER)

*The Addison Police Department has five (5) working days to respond to a private request.*

Signature of person requesting the report \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF PUBLIC RECORD: \_\_\_\_\_

REPORT NUMBER OR CASE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE(S) OF RECORD (IF KNOWN): \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF INCIDENT (IF KNOWN): \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR REQUESTING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS SECTION; TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ADDISON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Your request has been approved in whole: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your request has been approved in part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your request has been approved with redactions: \_\_\_\_\_  
See the reverse side for an explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your request is denied; see the attached letter of explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

There is no charge for requests less than 51 pages. Requests of 51 pages or more are 15 cents for each additional page. See the back of this form for charges for other requests.

This request was reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

**I HAVE RECEIVED THE COPIES OF THE REPORT I REQUESTED:**

Signature of Person Picking Up Report \_\_\_\_\_

Date Report was Picked Up \_\_\_\_\_

THREE FRIENDSHIP PLAZA, ADDISON, IL 60101

630-543-3080

fax: 630-543-1069

[www.Addisonadvantage.org](http://www.Addisonadvantage.org)

**APPLICABLE EXEMPTION CIRCLED BELOW**

- ☐ 1. Information specifically prohibited from disclosure by State or Federal law, or rules and regulations implementing State or Federal law. FOIA Sec. 7(1)(a).
- ☐ 2. Private Information – means unique identifiers including a person's social security number, driver's license number, employee identification number, biometric identifiers, personal financial information, passwords or other access codes, medical records, home or personal phone numbers, and personal e-mail addresses. Private information also includes home address and personal license plates, except as otherwise provided by law or when compiled without possibility of attribution to any person. FOIA Sec. 7(1)(b).
- ☐ 3. Personal Information – Information which, if disclosed, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, unless the disclosure is consented to in writing by the individual subjects of the information. FOIA Sec. 7(1)(c).
- ☐ 4. Records in the possession of any public body created in the course of administrative enforcement proceedings, and any law enforcement or correctional agency for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that disclosure would:
- A. Interfere with pending or actually and reasonably contemplated law enforcement proceedings conducted by any law enforcement agency that is the recipient of the request. FOIA 7(1)(d)(i)
  - B. Interfere with pending administrative enforcement proceedings conducted by any public body agency that is the recipient of the request. FOIA 7(1)(d)(ii)
  - C. Deprive a person of a fair trial or an impartial hearing. FOIA 7(1)(d)(iii)
  - D. Unavoidably disclose the identity of a confidential source of confidential information furnished only by the confidential source, or persons who file complaints with or provide information to administrative, investigative law enforcement of penal agencies; except that the identities of witnesses to traffic accidents, traffic accident reports, and rescue reports shall be provided by agencies of local government, except when disclosure would interfere with an active criminal investigation conducted by the agency that is the recipient of the request. FOIA 7(1)(d)(iv)
  - E. Disclose unique or specialized investigative techniques other than those generally used and known. FOIA 7(1)(d)(v)
  - F. Endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel or any other person. FOIA 7(1)(d)(vi)
  - G. Obstruct an ongoing criminal investigation by the agency that is the recipient of the request. FOIA 7(1)(d)(vii)
- ☐ 5. Communications between a public body and an attorney or auditor representing the public body that would not be subject to discovery in litigation, and materials prepared or compiled by or for a public body in anticipation of a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding upon the request of an attorney advising the public body, and materials prepared or compiled with respect to internal audits of public bodies. FOIA 7(1)(m)
- ☐ 6. Requests calling for all records falling within a category shall be complied with unless compliance with the request would be unduly burdensome for the public body and there is no way to narrow the request, and burden on the public body outweighs the public interest in the information. FOIA Section 3(g)

- ☐ 7. Records of law enforcement officers concerning all minors under the age of 17 years are not open to the public. 705 ILCS 405/5-905 (5)

**NOTICE: ANY PERSON DENIED ACCESS TO INSPECT OR COPY DEPARTMENT RECORDS MAY APPEAL THE DENIAL BY SENDING A WRITTEN NOTICE TO:**

**Public Access Counselor  
Illinois Attorney General's Office  
500 S. Second Street  
Springfield, IL 62705**

**217-558-0486**

**OR THEY MAY APPEAL THE DENIAL THROUGH JUDICIAL REVIEW UNDER SECTION 11 OF THE FOI ACT.**

**FEES:**

Fees are paid at the Village of Addison in the Finance Department. The Police Department does not accept payment.

1. Documents (not including Crash Reports) – Charges are applied per request, not per report.
  - No charge for less than 51 pages.
  - 15 cents for each page after 50 pages.
  - \$1.00 extra for certified reports.
2. Crash Reports - \$5.00 for each report
3. Accident Reconstruction Reports - \$20.00 for each report.
4. Photos - \$3.00 per print
5. CD (Audio) - \$10.00 each
6. DVD (Video) - \$25.00 each
7. There will be **no fee** for inspection of records.

**PLEASE NOTE:** When making a request via the Internet or Fax, the form containing your original signature must be presented at the time of release and fee payment. You will need to present a valid form of identification.

☐ Attestation of the Nonexistence of Record:

*I attest that after a thorough search of our files and records carried out under my direction and control, it was revealed the requested record does not exist. It is to be understood that this does not mean that the records do not exist under another spelling, another name or under another classification, but that with the information in your request furnished to our office and to the best of our knowledge, no such record(s) exist in our files.*

☐ Attestation of Destroyed Records:

*I attest that a thorough search of our files and records, carried out under my direction and control, revealed the requested record does not exist. The Department regularly maintains records such as those requested, however, pursuant to the Illinois Local Records Act, 50ILCS 205/7-10; the requested record no longer exists. In accordance to the Illinois Local Records Act and the Illinois Administrative Code, the requested records are retained for \_\_\_\_\_ years and are subsequently destroyed.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
FOIA Officer Signature





## LEGEND

- CELLULOSE BOUNDARY LINE:**
- SUBSTITUTION LINE:**
- HAZARDOUS**
- LINE WITHIN**
- PAVING**
- FIRE PREVENTION PROPERTIES**
- POLYMER CEMENTS**

