

Things to Know Before Renting an Apartment or a House

1. Do **not** the landlord show you one “just like it.”
2. Inspect the apartment carefully
 - a. Look for damages and other problems (WRITE IT ALL DOWN!)
 - b. Check plumbing, lights, appliances, heating, toilets, open the windows, and turn on the lights
 - c. Talk to the tenants who lived there before, or other people in the same building; ask if they have complaints about the building or management
3. List Damage(s)
 - a. Have the landlord sign it (Many leases already have this included.)
 - b. **Keep a copy!** (This will ensure you will not be charged for damages that are not your own.)
4. Check for Code Violations
 - a. Ask if there is anything you should know about the property
 - b. Call housing inspector, building inspector, or the health department if you have any concerns
5. Figure Out your Rental Costs
 - a. Heat/Air Conditioning
 - b. Water
 - c. Lights
 - d. Trash
 - e. Cable, Internet, Phone
 - f. Other (check with the Landlord, or the previous renters)
6. The Fixed Lease
 - a. Your right to stay in the rental property ends on that date
 - b. Common for 6 months or 1 year
 - c. You do not usually have to give an advance written notice
7. Periodic Lease
 - a. Does not have a specific or set ending date (Often month to month)
 - b. To end a periodic lease, the landlord or tenant must give written notice at least one full rental period in advance
8. Lease Information
 - a. Read all papers carefully before you sign it
 - b. Inform changes you wish to make on the document to the landlord
 - c. Write the agreed changes onto the lease, both you and the landlord should initial next to all changes
 - d. Be sure you get a copy of your lease
9. Record Keeping
 - a. Keep rental documents in the same place
 - i. Deposit receipts
 - ii. Rent receipts
 - iii. Inspection List
 - iv. Letters about your apartment

10. Sharing Apartments or Houses

- a. Choose your roommates carefully
- b. Be sure ALL roommates sign the lease
- c. All roommates are responsible to uphold the agreements of the lease, or risk eviction
- d. If more than one person rents the house or apartment each person is legally responsible for paying the whole rent.
 - i. If a roommate does not pay his or her share of the rent, someone will have to cover it.
 - ii. The same is true if a roommate moves out.
 - iii. You are able to sue another tenant if they leave without paying their share of the rent

11. Tenant Rights (For Minnesota)

- a. Your landlord must follow the rules of your lease
- b. Your landlord must keep your apartment free of health and safety hazards
- c. Your landlord must keep your apartment in good repair
- d. You have the right to call housing, health, safety, and fire inspectors and ask them to inspect your apartment
- e. Your building must be insulated and weatherized if it was built before 1976
- f. You have the right to be left alone and free of harassment
- g. You have the right to privacy and the right to keep your landlord from entering your apartment without your permission
- h. Your landlord must give you a certificate of rent paid (CPR) so that you can claim a state tax credit

12. Tenant Responsibilities

- a. Must provide references if the landlord asks for them
- b. Must pay the rent on time
- c. Must follow the rules of your lease
- d. Must pay for damages that are more than normal wear and tear to your apartment if you are responsible
- e. You cannot disturb other tenants
- f. You have to give proper written notice when you want to move out
- g. You cannot allow illegal activities on the property.

13. Other Important Responsibilities & Considerations to Remember When Renting a House or Apartment:

- a. The number of residents that are allowed to rent in the house or apartment
- b. Winter shoveling → sidewalks
- c. Noise/party rules
- d. Parking guidelines
- e. Garbage and recycling
- f. Mowing the lawn and other yard work