

Speak Up! Renting an apartment or house



You want live in a house or an apartment by yourself, with your family members or friends. You want to rent the house or apartment.

When you rent a place to live you are called a “tenant”. The person or company that you rent your place to live from is called the “landlord”.



As a tenant you have rights and responsibilities under the law. The law in Ontario is called the Residential Tenancies Act and it became a new law in 2007.



When you rent a place to live you make a legal contract with your landlord. The legal contract can be written down or just spoken. To make sure that everyone understands what you and the landlord are both responsible for, it is a good idea to have it written down.

Sometimes the legal contract between you and the landlord is called a “lease” or a “rental agreement”.

The rental agreement will tell you how much rent you have pay every month, and will also talk about the rules that you have to agree to if you want to live there.

Sometimes landlords try to get you to agree to rules that are illegal and cannot be included in the rental agreement or lease.

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As a **tenant you** are responsible to:

- ✓ Pay all the rent money every month on the date that is in the rental agreement.
- ✓ Pay a key deposit if you are asked to by the landlord. The landlord must give this money back to you when you move out and give the keys back to the landlord.
- ✓ Give the landlord a “security deposit” when you move in. This is money that the landlord will keep and it can only be used to pay for the last month’s rent. So when you decide to move out, the last month’s rent will already be paid for.

- ✓ Ask the landlord for a receipt every time you give him or her money for rent or other deposits.
- ✓ Keep the receipts with your other important papers so they do not get lost.
- ✓ Fix things in the apartment if you were careless with them or broke them on purpose. You do not have to fix things that came with the apartment like the refrigerator or stove if they just stopped working and you did not damage them on purpose.

- ✓ Tell the landlord 60 days before you want to move out. This is called “giving notice”. It lets your landlord know that you are going to move with lots of time for the landlord to find another tenant. There are certain words that you need to use in your letter when you give your notice to your landlord.
You must include:
 1. The address of your apartment that you are moving out of;
 2. The date you are moving;
 3. Your name and signature
 4. The date that you signed the letter to your landlord.
- ✓ Ask your support worker, a family member, friend or someone from the local Legal Aid Centre to help you with the letter.



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The landlord is responsible to:

- ✓ Make sure that your apartment is safe
- ✓ Make sure that your apartment and the building is warm, has hydro electricity, and water, even if have not paid your rent.
- ✓ Fix the stove or refrigerator if it is not working
- ✓ Make sure that there are not any bugs, mice or other pests in your apartment
- ✓ Let you know 1 day in advance (24 hours) in writing if he or she

needs to come inside your apartment.

There are laws in Canada that do not allow landlords to discriminate against people who want to rent a place to live.

Discrimination is when people are not treated with respect because they are different. For example, some landlords may tell you that they don't rent apartments to people with disabilities. This is discrimination and it is against the law in Canada.



The landlord will decide how much the rent will cost before you decide to sign the rental agreement or lease. Once you have moved in, the landlord can only increase how much you will pay in rent money after one year. There are rules that landlords have to follow if they are going to increase your rent. They can only increase your rent based on what it says in the guidelines and they have to tell you 90 days before your new rent is due.

If you have questions about renting a place to live you can ask your support worker, friend, family member or a worker at a community legal centre to help you. The address and phone number for the community legal centres in the Quinte and Ottawa Region are below.

Community Advocacy and Legal Centre
158 George Street, Level One
Belleville, ON
K8N 3H2

613-966-8686

Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre
1 Nicholas Street
Suite 422, Ottawa ON
K1N 7B7

613-241-7008

Pathways to Independence acknowledges and thanks Community Legal Education Ontario for some of the information in this flyer