

Be a Great Tenant

Understanding Your Responsibilities



Inspecting Your New Home



- Before you move in, do a walk-through inspection with your landlord.
- Check to make sure water, lights, and appliances are working properly.
- Make a note of any damages or wear and tear in the home.

Upholding Your Tenant Duties

When you become a tenant there are responsibilities you are agreeing to. If you are unclear about your responsibilities as a tenant be sure to clarify this with your landlord.

Understanding Your Lease

- Read your lease thoroughly before you sign.
- Know the rules about visitors, pets, and making changes to the unit.
- Find out what utilities you pay.
- Pay attention to any quiet hours.

Paying Rent and Utilities

- Always pay your portion of the rent and utilities on time or early!
- Call 2-1-1 for rental and utilities assistance programs if you are having financial hardship.



Keeping Your Home Clean

As a participant in a HUD funded housing program, you are required to pass Housing Quality Standards inspections. Maintaining the cleanliness of your home regularly will help you meet this program requirement.

- Avoid clutter! Take out trash, recycling, and compost regularly.
- Clean kitchen appliances and bathrooms.
- Vacuum and sweep floors often to avoid getting pests.
- To avoid mold, use fans or open windows in bathrooms and the kitchen.
- Maintain outside space and keep yards, porches, and balconies free from clutter.



Requesting Repairs



- Provide any request for repairs in writing to your landlord
- Keep a copy of all repair requests for your records
- Depending on the type of repair, allow 24 hours to 10 days for landlords to fix

Maintenance and Repairs

Normal Wear and Tear

- Expected deterioration of property due to everyday use.
- Landlord is responsible for repairs due to normal wear and tear.



Damages

- Deterioration of property caused by tenant not maintaining or mistreating property.
- You are responsible for repairs due to damages.



Bed Bugs and Other Pests

- Prevent bed bugs by being careful about what you bring into the home. Used furniture like couches and mattresses may be infested with bed bugs
- Let the landlord know if you see any signs of bed bugs or other pest infestation.
- Cooperate with landlord instructions if your home needs to be treated for bed bugs or other pests. The landlord is typically responsible for treating bed bugs.



Renter's Insurance



- Some properties will require that you purchase renter's insurance when you move in
- Renter's insurance can protect what's inside your home (furniture and other belongings) in case of theft, fire, or other damages
- Renter's insurance doesn't cost a lot, you may only pay \$10-\$15 a month!

Being a Good Neighbor

It is important to have a friendly relationship with your neighbors since you will be seeing each other often. A kind hello or conversation goes a long way, especially since you may have questions or need help from your neighbor in the future.

- Be respectful of neighbors and their privacy.
- If you have an issue with a neighbor speak with them directly before involving your landlord. If you feel threatened or unsafe, call the police.
- Do not smoke in your unit as it is disruptive to other tenants.
- Be aware of your family's noise level especially during quiet hours.



Being a Good Housing Choice Voucher Tenant



- Report changes of income and family composition in writing to your Housing Authority.
- If you or a family member plan on being out of the unit for more than 30-days, notify the Housing Authority in writing.
- If you plan on having guests in your unit, their stay cannot exceed two (2) weeks.
- Check your voucher packet for additional rules and regulations.

Rental Assistance Resources

Once you move into your new place you may need additional services that the CMTO program and the Housing Authority cannot provide. Familiarize yourself with resources available before you need them, that way you know where to turn if you need help.

Crisis Connections

Phone: 2-1-1

Website: www.crisisconnections.org

Tenants Union of Washington

Phone: 206-723-0500

Website: www.tenantsunion.org

Dispute Resolution Center of King County

Phone: 206-443-9603

Website: www.kcdrc.org

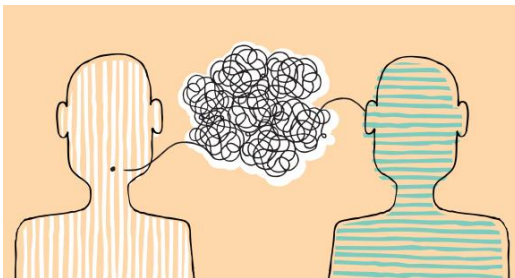
Solid Ground Tenant Resources

Phone: 206-694-6767

Website: www.solid-ground.org

Resolving Conflict with Your Landlord

Hopefully you never encounter conflicts with your landlord, but if you do, make sure to keep your cool. Always start out by talking through the issue before taking additional actions.



- Keep your cool and maintain a professional relationship.
- Talk it out.
- Document everything in writing.
- Know the law and what you agreed to in your lease.
- Talk to a professional mediator.

Communicate Effectively with Landlords

Presenting Your Best Self and Working with Landlords



Making a Good First Impression

First impressions are important for any relationship in your life, especially with a potential landlord. Your goal is to make a lasting, positive first impression, so you stand out amongst other applicants. Make sure the landlord knows you are taking this opportunity to house your family seriously and you will be a responsible future tenant.



- Dress professionally.
- Be on time for appointments.
- Respond quickly to emails and phone calls.
- Have your rental documents ready and organized.
- Think about who you bring to your appointments.
 - If you think your kids will be a distraction, make child care arrangements ahead of time.

Communicating with Landlords

Communication is key when it comes to relationships, especially a potential landlord. Be confident when speaking with landlords. If you are nervous about speaking about a rental barrier you can practice what you say with someone else.

- Be honest about your income, rental history, and family structure.
- Keep the relationship professional.
- Keep your word. Do not agree to things you cannot deliver on.
- Ask questions that will make you and your family feel comfortable living there.

