



4 Read your lease CAREFULLY.



5 Follow the rules.



6 Company coming?



7 Are you being victimized?

3 Make a list.



3

2 Does it check out?



2

1 Do the math.



1



12 Get a return!

12



11 Clean sweep!

11



10 Take photos.

10



8

8 Moving out?



9

9 Time's up.

READY TO RENT?

Renting a new place can be tricky. How much should you budget? What should you do when you move out? Use these tips and the checklist and you'll be ready to rent in no time. Let's go!



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1. Before you rent, make a budget and save for your security deposit. Many experts suggest spending no more than 30% of your gross income on rent.
2. Walk through the ACTUAL unit you will be renting. If the landlord won't let you see the unit, think twice. Renter beware!
3. Make a list of repairs. If important things don't work, ask the landlord to fix them BEFORE you sign your lease or move in.
4. Take photos BEFORE moving into your place. Carefully read your lease before you sign and make sure all things owed to you prior to move in are properly documented. After you sign the lease, keep the paperwork somewhere safe!
5. Pay your rent ON TIME. If late, the landlord can charge up to a 10% late fee. Do NOT withhold rent for a repair. All repair requests should be IN WRITING and the repair should be fixed within 14 days. (If not, call Legal Aid or a private attorney.) Keep a copy of the request you made.
6. Friends coming over? You are responsible for your guests. They have to follow the rules, too!
7. Landlords may NOT treat you differently because of your race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or having children. Reasonable accommodations must be made for people with disabilities. Need help? Call Legal Aid or a private attorney.
8. Read the lease 3 months before it ends. Inform your landlord IN WRITING that you're moving at least TWO MONTHS in advance.
9. When your lease expires, the landlord may/may not renew it. If your lease is not renewed but you keep living there, the lease will stay in effect but will be month-to-month.
10. Before you move out, schedule a walk through. Before leaving, remove ALL belongings and take photos of how you left the unit.
11. Leave your unit in broom-clean condition. Make a list of things to be fixed. If you and your landlord agree, sign the list. (If you disagree, make separate lists.) Forward your mail to your new address.
12. Request return of your security deposit in writing. Make sure the landlord knows where to send it.

CHECK THIS, RENTERS!

BEFORE YOU MOVE IN:

Can you afford rent + security deposit + other fees?

Is the unit in good condition?

Floors, stairs, windows, gutters, etc.

Plumbing: toilets, sinks, drains, shower heads

Electrical wiring

Smoke alarms

Make sure appliances work

Make sure doors and windows open/shut, lock

Cleanliness: evidence of bugs or mice, mold

Take pictures.

Sign the lease and keep a copy for your records.

WHEN LIVING THERE:

Pay rent on time.

Make requests for repairs in writing. Keep a copy of the request for yourself.

Read the lease three months before it ends.

Notify the landlord in writing when you plan to leave. Keep a copy of the notification.

WHEN YOU MOVE OUT:

Schedule a walk through with your landlord.

Remove all belongings from the unit.

Leave unit broom clean.

Take pictures.

Forward mail to new address.

During walk through, make list of things to be repaired.
If you and landlord disagree, make separate lists.

Sign walk-through list only if you agree.

Make sure the landlord knows where to send security deposit.

Receive security deposit. If withheld, seek legal advice.



For more information about renting, contact the
Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland
at 1-800-238-1443 or www.las.org.

You can also contact the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance
at 615-741-2241 or www.tn.gov/commerce.

