

LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

Renters: Know Your Rights!

You **can** take your tenant to court if they owe rent or break their lease, but you **CAN'T**:



Change the locks to make them leave



Shut off their utilities (lights, water, gas)



Set their things on the street or remove them from the property

If you do any of these before going to court, your tenant can sue you.

Make Repairs



Repair damages not intentionally caused by your tenant or the tenants' guests. You're responsible for keeping the building fit and habitable.

Supply working heating and utility equipment. You don't have to pay for the utilities, but you do have to make sure they work.

Comply with all building and housing codes. Remember, codes violations are public information!

Maintain common areas. For buildings with 4 or more units, you also have to provide trash receptacles.

Follow Procedures



Do not lock your tenant out of the apartment without bringing a court proceeding. Doing or threatening to do that is considered an illegal eviction and your tenant can sue you!

Deposit security deposits into a separate account. Provide an itemized, written list of damages discovered within 30 days of the tenant moving out.

Respecting Tenants' Rights



Abide by your tenant's right to privacy. You must give reasonable notice before entering the apartment, and may only enter for specific reasons.

Do not discriminate against tenants. Follow the rules set out in the Fair Housing Act and Tennessee Human Rights Law.

Do not harass your tenants. This includes entering the unit unlawfully or locking them out.

These are just the basics! **Read the state laws** to see what other responsibilities you might have.