

Tips on renting and protecting yourself as a tenant

All anyone ever wants is to have an easy renting experience, but it's not always easy. Here are some quick and easy tips to “have your own back” during the rental process.

- 1. Don't rent site unseen. Go and see the unit.** This may not always be possible when you don't live in the same city and don't have a friend or family member that could visit the unit in your place. But if you can, always visit the unit BEFORE you sign a lease agreement.
- 2. Ask questions.** Are utilities included? Who exactly is the landlord and what is their contact information? If it is a house, who shovels the snow? If it is a shared accommodation, what exactly is included in the rental? Who do I make a maintenance request to?
- 3. Make sure you sign a proper lease and get your own copy.** As of March 1, 2021, all residential tenancies lease agreements in Ontario have to use the NEW official Residential Tenancy Agreement form. If you don't get your own copy immediately upon signing, take photos of the lease and keep them for your records. Follow up with the landlord to make sure you get your own copy. If the landlord is a corporation, make sure you have the contact information of the agent or property manager.
- 4. Rent receipts.** Collect your rent receipts and keep them for your records. Even if you pay by automatic withdrawal, ask for receipts. Your landlord is required to give you a rent receipt upon request.
- 5. Use email for maintenance requests.** Whenever possible use email or written correspondence for maintenance requests. If maintenance requests can only be made by telephone, make sure to document the call including the date and time, who you spoke with, the nature of the issue and any next steps. If there is a form to fill out, take a photo or keep a copy for your records.
- 6. Take photos.** Take photos of the unit when you first move in, any maintenance and repair issues that come up during the tenancy and of the final walk-through when you leave the unit having terminated the tenancy. The limitation period for most issues to be raised at the Landlord and Tenant Board is 12 months so keep them at least that long.

For more tips and information check out Steps to Justice [“Questions About – Renting a new place to live”](#).

You can also check out the [Residential Tenancies Act, 2006](#) (which governs the relationship between residential tenants and landlords in Ontario).

The Landlord and Tenant Board publishes [guidelines](#) to help tenants and landlords understand the processes at the Board and their rights.