

TENANT HANDBOOKS:
WHY YOU WANT THEM,
NEED THEM & WILL LOVE
THEM

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Why Have a Tenant Handbook?

- Clear identification of the Landlord's expectations of the Tenant
- Tells Tenant what he or she can expect of the Landlord
- Good resource for Tenants and family members
 - Provides information
 - May save time for Landlord and avoid confusion for Tenant
- Can be incorporated into the lease without being attached to it

What Should be in a Tenant Handbook?

- A Landlord can address a number of topics in its Tenant Handbook
- Not all topics apply to every Landlord
- If a Landlord has certain policies or rules that apply to a Tenant, those areas should be summarized in the Tenant Handbook

What Should Not be in a Tenant Handbook?

- Do not include the specific text of the Landlord's policies and rules
 - Stick to a summary
 - Direct the Tenant to someone within the organization for further information
- Do not restate the terms of the lease
 - The Landlord and Tenant have already signed this and are bound by it
 - Use the Tenant Handbook to supplement information included in the lease

How is a Tenant Handbook Different than a Lease?

- Lease:
 - Legally binding contract between Landlord and Tenant
 - Identifies obligations of parties to each other
 - Shorter, more concise document
- Handbook:
 - Guide to living in building
 - Supplements lease
 - Offers specific information on a variety of topics
 - Much more detailed

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Welcome
- History of organization
- Acknowledgment
- Information that expands on terms of lease
 - Requirements for service providers brought in by Tenant
 - Ability of Tenant to transfer to another apartment
 - Referral procedures
 - Complaint resolution process
 - Overnight guests

Lease vs. Tenant Handbook

Lease:	Tenant Handbook:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Outside service providers:</u> Tenant can choose <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Transferring units:</u> Tenant may request or Landlord may require transfer <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Referral procedures:</u> Landlord may assist with finding new provider if needed <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complaint resolution process:</u> Tenant can contact Housing Manager and/or ombudsman <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Overnight guests:</u> Tenant can have for reasonable length of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Outside service providers:</u> Providers must follow Landlord's policies for visitors <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Transferring units:</u> Identify circumstances under which Landlord may seek transfer <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Referral procedures:</u> What is the process to be followed? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Complaint resolution process:</u> Identify specific procedure to be used by Tenant to resolve complaint <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Overnight guests:</u> At what point is a guest no longer welcome?

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Descriptions, locations and hours of various amenities
 - Beauty/barber shop
 - Meals and snacks
 - Gift shop
 - Notary public services
 - Regularly-scheduled activities
 - Fitness center
 - Lost and found

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Other perks of being a Tenant
 - Ability to reserve certain areas of building for private use
 - Private dining room
 - Guest suite
 - Access to outside services
 - Dry cleaning
 - Postal service
 - Transportation
 - Trash and recycling
 - Use of storage area
 - Availability of parking

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Expectations for Tenant behavior
 - Be considerate of others
 - Do not be disruptive or destructive
 - Use objective criteria to determine violation
 - Do not give staff gifts or tips
 - Process for paying rent and consequences of not doing so
 - Rent is late
 - Check is NSF
 - Maintain keys and other items provided by Landlord
 - Abide by pet and smoking policies

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Emergency procedures
 - Severe weather
 - Fire
 - Loss of power
 - Fire doors
 - Elevators
 - Emergency response for health-related issues

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Landlord commitments
 - Building maintenance
 - Process for upkeep and repairs
 - Schedule for testing various alarms and systems
 - Smoke detectors
 - Security features
 - Lawn care and snow removal schedule
- Security features
 - Secure building access
 - Locked unit information
 - Use of cameras

Topics for Tenant Handbook

- Other areas to address
 - Live-in aids
 - Parking for guests
 - Tenant's ability to maintain vehicle on site
 - Tenant absences
 - Guest policies
 - Participation (or not) in public assistance programs
 - Contact information for Landlord and home care agency staff
 - Contact information for various service providers
 - Phone and cable company
 - Newspaper delivery
 - Area clergy

Developing Your Tenant Handbook

- No two Tenant Handbooks are alike
- Make sure to include information relevant to Tenants' lives in your building
- Review and update regularly
- Communicate changes to Tenants
- Maintain a signed acknowledgment in each Tenant's file

Rewards of a Tenant Handbook

- Effective and consistent communication of information from Landlord to all Tenants
- Fewer questions from Tenants regarding basics of building operations
 - Results in Landlord's ability to focus on bigger issues
- Smoother-run building
- Everyone lives happily ever-after . . .

	QUESTIONS?????

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