

There's a place for everyone in Evanston. Whether you live in one of the city's vintage courtyard buildings, a modern high-rise, a traditional two-flat, or a single family house, making your home in Evanston means living in a community where everyone is welcome.

The City of Evanston is committed to safeguarding the rights of everyone in its rental housing community, which constitutes half of the housing stock. Evanston's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (RLTO) provides important protections that benefit both tenants and landlords. It is important to understand how these rights and responsibilities affect you.

Landlords are required to provide copies of the ordinance to all tenants before signing or renewing a lease. We urge you to read the law carefully, along with your lease agreement. This brochure is not a legal document or a substitute for the law, but will introduce you to some of the most important rights and responsibilities of renters and landlords in Evanston.

What a landlord can't do

- Lock you out. If this occurs, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Raise the rent during the term of the lease.
- Threaten to cut off services, raise the rent, or evict a tenant because he or she complains to management or any government agency about a problem affecting health or safety.
- Change the locks, shut off utilities, or remove tenants' belongings to force them to leave.
- Charge an additional security deposit for a support animal (such as a seeing-eye dog).

What the lease can't do

- A lease cannot require tenants to give up their rights to a livable residence or return of a security deposit, and/or payment of security deposit interest.
- A lease cannot require tenants to pay the landlord any attorney fees for the cost of collecting rent or limit the amount a landlord has to pay for breaking a lease.



Learn more at www.interfaithhousingcenter.org. The Interfaith Housing Center is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to fair and affordable housing. Founded in 1972, the Center advances housing justice by promoting open, diverse, and inclusive communities throughout Chicago's northern suburbs.

Where can I get more help and information?

Evanston's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance and yearly interest rates for security deposits are available on the city's web site, at www.cityofevanston.org/government/city-code/landlord-tenant-ordinance/. If you have other questions about landlord and tenant law, or a specific problem, call the following numbers:

- For heat emergencies after hours and on weekends, call the Police non-emergency number at (847) 866-5000 and ask for the Property Standards Inspector on call to be paged.
- For non-emergency building issues, call the city's Property Standards Division at 311 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- For legal advice, a private attorney or, if income-qualified or elderly, the Legal Assistance Foundation (312) 341-1070.
- For other housing issues, contact the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs, which will, at no charge, inform you of your rights and options, assist you and your neighbors to resolve housing disputes, and provide referrals.



Welcome to Evanston, Illinois

Tenant & Landlord Rights and Responsibilities

"The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people."

— Abraham Lincoln



City of
Evanston™

Tenant rights and responsibilities

- **Pay your rent on time each month.** Landlords can charge a late fee if rent is not paid when it's due.
- **Do not damage or remove anything** from the apartment or common areas.
- **Do not let garbage accumulate**, and throw away trash according to the landlord's rules.
- **Use appliances, plumbing, and electrical systems only as intended.** (For example, never use the oven as a source of heat and do not overload electrical outlets).
- **You can cancel the lease** if a landlord fails to supply heat, running water, hot water, electricity, gas, or plumbing and services are not restored within seven days of your written notice.
- **You may be able to make minor repairs yourself** and deduct the cost from your rent if the landlord does not fix smaller problems within fourteen days' of your written notice.
- **Allow the landlord to enter your unit** to inspect it or make repairs, as long as you receive two days' notice first.
- **You have the right to organize** with your neighbors if problems are building-wide.
- **Follow all community rules**, including requirements about parking, pets, noise, etc.
- **Do not engage in illegal activity** on the premises as this allows the landlord to terminate your lease.
- **Tell your landlord** if you are going to be away for more than three weeks.
- Keep a copy of your lease, along with all receipts, cancelled rent checks and copies of any letters that you send to or receive from the landlord.
- **Know that if you get an eviction notice** for unpaid rent, you have no more than ten days to pay before the landlord can file an eviction summons in court.
- **If you get an eviction summons**, contact a lawyer or the Interfaith Housing Center. Please note that victims of domestic violence have special protections.

Landlord rights and responsibilities

- Treat all current and prospective tenants fairly without regard to race, religion, sex, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, presence of children in the residence, age and other characteristics protected by fair housing laws.
- Give all tenants a copy of the name, address, and 24-hour telephone number of the property manager in writing.
- Inform tenants of all community rules before they sign the lease.
- Make sure the rental unit meets standards for health and safety.
- Disclose any known lead, radon or building code violations cited by the City of Evanston.
- Supply hot and cold running water.
- Provide adequate heat. From September 15 to June 1, the temperature must be no lower than
 - 63°F from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
 - 65°F from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m.
 - 68°F from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Maintain electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems in good working order. Make repairs as needed to keep all units and common areas safe and livable.
- Give two days written notice before entering a tenant's unit, except in an emergency.
- Do not charge security deposits of more than one-and-a-half (1 ½) times monthly rent.
- Pay tenants interest on their security deposit each year within 30 days of the expiration of their lease. (The required interest rate is set by the City of Evanston each year.)
- Return security deposits in full within 21 days after a tenant moves out. Any deductions made for cleaning or repairs (above normal wear and tear) must be listed in writing. Failure to comply could result in damages owed to the tenant of up to two months' rent.
- Issue tenants a written notice to pay rent within ten days of the due date or face eviction. If a tenant breaks the lease in any other way, you may issue a 30-day notice to correct the problem or face eviction.
- Allow the tenants to live in their apartment in peace and without harassment.

