

5 ways to protect yourself when renting

You may not have a problem with your landlord now. Unfortunately, this can change, and it is important to be ready if it does. Keep records of everything and store letters and receipts in a folder or large envelope, and consider the following ideas:

1. Get receipts

- ⇒ You can ask for a receipt, but the law only requires the landlord to provide a receipt if the rent is paid in cash. If the landlord does not follow the law and refuses to give you a receipt you will need to have another way to prove that you did in fact pay your rent. It's better to pay by cheque or money order if you can, and have a witness with you when you pay.

2. Put it in writing

- ⇒ Putting things in writing creates a good record of what has happened. You may need it to verify your side of the story later on. Keep details of names, dates, what happened, and any other important information.
- ⇒ When you need to inform your landlord of something like repairs that need to be done or that you are moving, put it in writing and keep a copy of your dated and signed letter for yourself.
- ⇒ Also, read carefully and keep everything that your landlord gives you such as your tenancy agreement, condition inspection reports, and any letters or notices.

3. Have a witness

- ⇒ Many times you cannot get things in writing or haven't taken pictures. A witness is good evidence of what happened – what they saw or heard. A witness should be someone other than the people who live in your place. Roommates and partners are not considered the best witnesses.

4. Take pictures

- ⇒ Sometimes a picture truly is worth a thousand words. Pictures are very good evidence. You should put the date and time the photo was taken on the back of the picture. The witness can sign to verify this is true.
- ⇒ Take pictures as soon as you realize there is a problem, because the landlord may come and patch up the problem or cover it and your chance to get good evidence is gone.

5. Find out about your rights and responsibilities!

- ⇒ What might seem fair may not be what the law says you can do. Find out what the law says before things get too complicated.