

## Renting in the Commonwealth of Virginia:

# Know Your Rights & Responsibilities Tenant Toolkit

As a renter or as a landlord, there are certain rights and responsibilities that come with renting a home in Virginia. A summary can be found in the [Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities](#). As of July 1, 2020, all landlords must offer the Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities to tenants entering new or renewed leases. Within one month of the rental agreement, both the landlord and tenant must sign a form at the end of the statement acknowledging that the tenant has received from the landlord the statement of tenant rights and responsibilities.

Under Virginia law, tenants have certain rights when they move in, while they are renting, and before they can be evicted. You are a tenant if you pay regular amounts of rent during regular time periods, such as once a month or once a week. You are a tenant if you have a written lease for a period of more than 90 days. You also are a tenant if you have lived in a hotel or motel for more than 90 days even without a lease. Tenants and landlords have legal protections under the [Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act](#) (VRLTA). The VRLTA applies to most residential rental properties in Virginia.

For more detailed information on the rights and responsibilities, please refer to the [Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant handbook](#). The handbook provides further information on the rental process. Before signing a lease, prospective tenants should read and understand the terms of the contract. Please consult a lawyer, LegalAid, or the landlord for clarification of the rental agreement.

## Resources:

### Tenant & Landlord Resources

[www.dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources)

The above link includes copies of:

- Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Handbook
- Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act
- Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

### Tenant Protections

[Information for Tenants to Avoid Eviction  
HOMEofVA.org/TenantProtections](http://HOMEofVA.org/TenantProtections)

Beginning July 1, 2021

For assistance contact: **804-354-0641**

### Helpful Links

For those impacted by COVID-19 needing rent relief:

- [Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia](#)  
**1-877-315-1200** & leave a message

For non-COVID-19 rental housing resources:

- [Housing Resource Line](#)

For rental housing legal assistance:

- [Central Virginia Legal Aid Society](#)
- [Virginia Legal Aid](#)
- [Virginia Poverty Law Center](#)

For housing discrimination assistance:

- [Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia](#)
- [Virginia Fair Housing Office](#)

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This document can be found online at [HOMEofVA.org/TenantToolkit](http://HOMEofVA.org/TenantToolkit)

*\*This information is not legal advice.*

*This toolkit is provided by Housing Opportunities Made Equal with support from the City of Richmond, Henrico County, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.*



# What Your Rights & Responsibilities Include

As a tenant or landlord, it is important to know your rights and responsibilities in Virginia. The following is condensed from the Landlord Tenant Handbook. Follow the link to read the full [Landlord Tenant Handbook](#).



## Your Rights Include

### A Fair Application Fee

Tenants may be charged a nonrefundable application fee of no more than \$50 (not including third party costs for a background check) and a refundable application deposit.

### No Discrimination by Your Landlord

Virginia's fair housing laws make it illegal to discriminate in residential housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, disability, source of funds, sexual orientation, gender identity, and veteran status. If you feel that you have been discriminated against in a housing transaction, contact [Housing Opportunities Made Equal](#), the [Virginia Fair Housing Office](#), or Virginia Relay 7-1-1.

### A Fair Security Deposit

The security deposit can't be more than two months' rent.

### Privacy

A landlord may not release information about a tenant without consent, except under certain conditions, which are generally when tenant information is already public.

### Proper Notifications

Tenants should be informed of a change in management, ownership, or change of the property for some other use, rent increase or decrease in services, and common repairs and maintenance.

### A Decent & Safe Place to Live With a Certain Level of Security

Landlords are required to follow building and housing codes affecting health and safety and to make all repairs needed to keep the dwelling unit habitable.

### A Written Lease

As of July 1, 2019, landlords must offer written leases.

### A Proper Eviction Notice

A landlord may not evict a tenant without following the court eviction process, which first includes sending a written notice such as a "Notice of Default," "Late Rent Notice," or "Pay or Quit."

## Your Responsibilities Include

### Reading & Understanding Your Lease Before You Sign

When you sign something, you are agreeing to it. Read your lease and all agreements before signing. Educating yourself allows you to make good decisions and be prepared for any potential problems that could occur.

### Paying Your Rent On or Before the Due Date

The lease should explain what date your rent must be paid by and indicate the late fee if one will be assessed following a late payment. Open communication to the landlord is important when you are unable to pay the rent.

### Maintaining the Rental Unit

Ensure unit is kept safe, clean, and free of garbage, waste, pests, and other hazards, and that the appliances within it are used and maintained properly.

### Respecting Other Neighbors' Peace & Quiet

Tenants and anyone they allow onto the property have the obligation to conduct themselves in a way that will not be disruptive to their neighbors.

### Acknowledgment of Receipt of Statement of Tenant Rights & Responsibilities

Both the landlord and tenant must sign a form at the end of the statement acknowledging that the tenant has received from the landlord the statement of tenant rights and responsibilities.

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