



DATCP Provides Reminder on Rental Housing Rights and Responsibilities

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MADISON, Wis. – August is one of Wisconsin’s busiest months for landlords and tenants, especially in college towns as students move into and out of rental properties throughout the state. Whether a tenant has been renting for years, or their new lease is the first contract they have ever signed, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is here to help them remember their legal rights and responsibilities.

Tenants can access DATCP’s “[Tenants’ Rights and Responsibilities](#)” fact sheet online for an overview of common rental housing issues including security deposits, rent increases, property maintenance, and more. For more details on these and other related topics, DATCP’s “Landlord-Tenant Guide” is accessible at [LandlordTenant.wi.gov](#). This free online guide helps ensure both parties in a rental housing transaction understand their obligations to each other.

In 2022, consumers filed 1,912 complaints when disputes between landlords and tenants could not be resolved between each other, making it DATCP’s top complaint category last year.

Tips for Moving In

- If a security deposit is required, tenants have seven days after the start of tenancy to inspect the premises and notify the landlord of any defects by returning a check-in sheet. Take photos of any damages, submit copies of the photos with the sheet, and keep a copy of all these materials for your own records.
- Make sure your new landlord shares the contact information including the name and address of a person who can be contacted regarding maintenance problems. Landlords must provide this information at the start of tenancy.
- Reread your lease thoroughly so you understand what is required of you. Make note of what utilities you are responsible for paying, what repairs and property maintenance you are expected to fulfill, and when your landlord is authorized to enter your unit.

Tips for Moving Out

- Ask your landlord for a preliminary walkthrough of your housing unit before your final checkout. This will help you assess what needs to be cleaned or repaired to avoid security deposit deductions.
- Take detailed photos of the property during your final walkthrough to document the condition in which you left it.
- Provide your landlord with your new address to receive your security deposit promptly.
- The security deposit must be returned to you within 21 days after the end of the rental agreement, except for any amounts withheld for damage, waste or neglect. Any withholdings must be itemized for your review.

For more information and resources or to file a complaint, visit [ConsumerProtection.wi.gov](#). If you have questions or want to check for complaints against a business, contact DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

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