

Renter's Checklist

Everything to check, ask, and document — from touring an apartment to getting your full deposit back.

1 BEFORE YOU SIGN A LEASE

- ☐ Confirm the landlord/property manager is legitimate
- ☐ Read the entire lease carefully, including fine print
- ☐ Clarify rent amount, due date & payment methods
- ☐ Ask about late fees and grace periods
- ☐ Understand security deposit amount & return conditions
- ☐ Check lease length and renewal/termination terms
- ☐ Ask about pet policies and related fees
- ☐ Confirm which utilities are included
- ☐ Ask about parking availability and cost
- ☐ Understand maintenance/repair responsibilities
- ☐ Check policies on subletting or roommates
- ☐ Ask about renters insurance requirements
- ☐ Get all verbal promises in writing

2 BEFORE MOVE-IN

- ☐ Walk through & document existing damage (photo/video, timestamped)
- ☐ Get a signed move-in condition report
- ☐ Test all appliances (stove, fridge, dishwasher, washer/dryer)
- ☐ Check water pressure and hot water
- ☐ Test all light switches and outlets
- ☐ Check windows & doors open, close, and lock properly
- ☐ Test smoke & carbon monoxide detectors
- ☐ Check for pests or water damage/mold
- ☐ Confirm number of keys/fobs provided
- ☐ Set up renters insurance
- ☐ Transfer/set up utilities in your name
- ☐ Update your address everywhere

3 DURING TENANCY

- ☐ Pay rent on time; keep payment records/receipts
- ☐ Report maintenance issues promptly, in writing
- ☐ Keep copies of all landlord communication
- ☐ Know your local tenant rights
- ☐ Review lease before any renewal deadline
- ☐ Keep renters insurance active

4 BEFORE MOVE-OUT

- ☐ Review lease for required notice period
- ☐ Give written move-out notice on time
- ☐ Schedule a move-out walkthrough
- ☐ Clean the unit thoroughly
- ☐ Repair any damage you caused
- ☐ Photograph/video final condition
- ☐ Return all keys, fobs & garage openers
- ☐ Provide a forwarding address for deposit
- ☐ Cancel or transfer utilities
- ☐ Update your address again

5 SECURITY DEPOSIT FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Know your state's deadline for deposit return (often 14–30 days)
- ☐ Request an itemized list of any deductions
- ☐ Dispute unfair deductions in writing

Tip: Always keep a personal folder (digital or physical) with your lease, move-in/move-out photos, receipts, and all written communication with your landlord. It's your best protection if a dispute ever comes up.