



Move In/Move Out Tips for Renters

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MADISON – Moving can be an anxiety-provoking activity, and the stressors don't end with finding a truck, packing and unpacking, and getting in and out of a rental unit. There is also the matter of the security deposit and all of its related requirements. To help demystify the security deposit issue, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) offers a number of tips to help renters understand their rights and responsibilities when entering or leaving a rental agreement.

“For many college-aged consumers, renting is a new concept and one that entails a whole new range of terms and responsibilities,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “A security deposit can put hundreds of dollars on the line for a renter, so it is important to consider the things you need to do to ensure that you get as much of that money back as possible at the end of your lease.”

To help renters understand their rights, DATCP offers a “[Tenants’ Rights and Responsibilities](#)” fact sheet as a free download. This document addresses a wide range of rental-related topics including security deposits, rent increases, evictions, property maintenance and more. Renters should familiarize themselves with their rights before they start the move in/move out process.

To help landlords and tenants avoid common misunderstandings, the agency also offers its “[Guide for Landlords and Tenants](#)” document as a free download. The Guide is more extensive than the fact sheet and answers commonly asked questions about each party’s rights and responsibilities in simple language.

“Of all the consumer complaints that DATCP received in 2016, the landlord/tenant category ranked second, with security deposit issues being the main driver for the grievances,” said Frassetto. “Being educated on your rights as a tenant is key to avoiding and resolving disputes with your landlord.”

Move out tips:

- Ask your landlord for a preliminary walkthrough before your final checkout tour. This will give you a chance to see what needs special attention for cleaning or repair and may help you avert potential security deposit deductions.
- Be sure to provide your new address in order to receive your security deposit promptly. (If you are moving out at the end of your lease, the landlord must return your security deposit, less any amounts that may be withheld, within 21 days after you move out.)
- Take detailed photos of the property before your final walkthrough in order to document the condition in which you left it.

Move in tips:

- Complete a check-in sheet when you get the keys. If your lease requires a security deposit, you have seven days from the first rental date to complete a check-in report that notes pre-existing conditions. If you fail to return a check-in sheet within seven days, you may be giving up your right to contest some security deposit withholdings for pre-existing conditions. Take photos of any damages, submit copies of the photos to your landlord with the report, and keep a copy of all of these materials for yourself.

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- At the start of a tenancy, the landlord must provide you with the name and address of a person who can be readily contacted regarding maintenance problems. But unless otherwise agreed, tenants are usually responsible for routine minor repairs and are required to comply with any maintenance and sanitation requirements imposed on tenants by local housing codes.

If you have issues regarding your security deposit or questions about your rights as a tenant, contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128 or via email: datcph hotline@wi.gov. Also, look for rental assistance organizations in your area and find out if they offer walk-in service to discuss any issues you may face.

For additional consumer protection information, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at <http://datcp.wi.gov> or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer or Twitter: [@wiconsumer](https://twitter.com/wiconsumer).

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