

LANDLORD AND TENANT GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL LEASING
(PREPARED BY THE CITY OF ROME'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT)

As we all know, a property owner's (landlord's) mission is to simply rent to individuals who pay their rent in a timely fashion, obey laws and rental contracts, and take reasonably good care of their rented property.

We also know that a tenant expects that a landlord will be responsive to complaints, make timely repairs when necessary, and will maintain a clean, safe environment for the tenant.

Below we have provided some tips and information to help increase the chances that both landlord and tenant have the best possible rental experience:

- ***Always insure that a written lease agreement/contract, agreed to by both parties, is understood and executed.***
- ***Landlords should supply a prospective tenant with their written selection criteria and include same on the rental application.***
- ***Landlord should also include, with the application, written notice of grounds and circumstances which may cause denial of application, such as: negative criminal history, negative previous rental history, insufficient or no income, poor credit history, failure to provide accurate or complete information on rental application, etc.***
- ***A Landlord should require the prospective tenant to provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers where tenant previously resided, and conduct follow-up inquiries with same before renting/leasing to the prospective tenant.***
- ***Rental applications/contracts should contain a minimum of the following: applicant's full name (including middle name), current address, date of birth and social security number.***

- **Rental applications should contain a signed section authorizing the landlord to obtain a credit report and background check on the prospective tenant.**
- **Landlords should be aware that they may not be able to order a credit report on a tenant directly from a credit bureau but may obtain same through a credit reporting agency or tenant screening service.**
- **The landlord should be willing to accept a legitimate credit report from one of the “big 3” (Experian, TransUnion, or Equifax) obtained by the prospective tenant within the past 30 days.**
- **The landlord is entitled to charge a reasonable, non-refundable fee for this service and should advise the prospective tenant in writing what that fee will be.**
- **It is strongly recommended that property owners/landlords also consider obtaining a background check on the prospective tenant. There are many companies offering this fee based service via the internet. A small initial investment now can potentially save you from future costly financial, emotional, and time-consuming issues which may result when dealing with a bad tenant.**
- **The property owner/landlord is strongly encouraged to contact the Code Enforcement Office to determine the maximum occupancy limitations of the dwelling unit being offered for lease.**

- **Tenant should insure rental contract states exactly how much notification is required to move out.**
- **Tenant should insure they are aware of what circumstances will result in forfeiture of security deposit.**
- **Tenant should always do a “walk-thru” with the property owner/landlord, in the apartment they will actually be residing in (not a model or other “similar” apartment), prior to taking possession.**
- **Tenant should document in writing and photos if possible, with the landlord present, any pre-existing damage, broken or non-**

functioning appliances, scratches to floors, holes in walls, missing or damaged window screens, etc., to insure security deposit won't be unjustifiably withheld.

- *Be clear on who's responsible for grass mowing, snow shoveling, etc...and in what time frame it will be done.*
- *Tenant, to get ahead of the renting competition, consider having a letter signed by your employer handy that verifies your employment and salary.*
- *Both landlord and tenant can find many additional excellent suggestions on the internet to further guide both toward their best chance to insure a safe, reliable, informed rental experience. Both parties should also remember that internet search engines such as Google, Bing, etc. are free and can often provide instantaneous access to valuable information pertinent to the tenant, landlord, or the rental property.*
- ***MOST IMPORTANTLY:** A Property Owner (Landlord) needs to stay involved with his/her rental property(s). Make periodic checks of the property and inquiries with the neighbors to insure that your tenant(s) are renting in a responsible manner. This will insure that potential problems can be addressed well before progressing to the point where action is required by the City.*

Tenants and landlord's should also be aware that both NY State and Federal laws make it unlawful for a landlord to discriminate based on a tenant's race, color, disability, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or age. In addition, some states may enact further discrimination restrictions.

We, the City of Rome, believe that if both tenant and landlord adhere to these simple tips, principles and guidelines, the chances for a smooth and enjoyable rental experience for all, will be greatly improved.

Michael D. Grande

Commissioner of Public Safety