

Rental Information Kit



Helping You Make More Placements

800.522.1052



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Thank you for your interest in our services for rental assistance. The information provided in this packet will assist you in renting an apartment or a home in your new location. We will provide helpful websites and information that all renters need to know. If you have any questions about the information provided in this packet, please contact your FAS Relocation Coach, at 1-800-522-1052.

Before you start your internet search for a new apartment in your destination, you might want to answer a few questions to help you narrow your search. Some questions you might want to ask are:

- What are the things I cannot live without in my new home?
(i.e. onsite laundry, pool, high speed internet, etc.)
- What am I willing to do without?
- What is my budget?
- Is my credit acceptable for a rental application?
- What is my maximum commute time to work?
- Is public transportation important?

Below you will find some quality websites with which we have seen prior success. Please take a look at more than one of these websites to assist you in narrowing your search.

Special FAS Relocation Rental Website:

www.cort.com/clients/virtual/FAS

Apartment Search Websites:

www.apartmentguide.com

www.rent.com

www.rent.net

www.forrent.com

www.apartments.com

www.apartments.net

www.bestplaces.net

Private Rental Websites:

www.craigslist.org

www.rentclicks.com

www.rentalhouses.com

www.homerentals.net

www.realtor.com (click advanced, select rentals, unselect all other home types)

www.thepaperboy.com (to find local paper – look in classifieds)

www.ipl.org



Do you need to rent furniture for your apartment?

If you are looking for a furnished apartment and you are having difficulty finding apartment complexes that have apartments that are already furnished, there is another option. There are furniture rental stores that deliver furniture at the beginning of your lease and pick up the furniture when the rental period is over. Most of these furniture rental places offer monthly installments for payment as well. Some websites to take a look at are:

www.cortfurniture.com

www.rentacenter.com

www.aaronrents.com

www.bfr.com

www.rentfurniture.com

What to bring with you when touring units if you may be looking to rent that day:

- Drivers License or official identification card
- Social Security Card or #
- W-2 Form for annual wages
- Last 3 payroll stubs

Note: An *offer letter* that includes pay and start date for the new position can replace the *payroll stubs*.

- Previous year's tax return if you are/were self employed
- Money – Some places will accept security deposits with personal check, but others will require a certified check or money order. Most require the security deposit and application fee to be separate checks.
- References for the last 2 years of residence

Here are some tips for touring multiple apartment communities:

- Take pictures of each property and apartment, so that you can review your choices at the end of a long touring day.
- Be sure to ask for floor plans of the apartments you like and ask the leasing agent to mark the available units on a property map.
- It is also helpful to mark each floor plan brochure with the rent amount, since the rates are variable based on floor plan and floor level.

Lease Break Language:

Many times when transferring with a corporation, it is possible that you may move again before your lease is up. It is always beneficial to include lease break language in your lease, to protect you from paying a hefty lease cancellation fee for leaving early. Be sure to talk to the leasing agent about inserting a transfer clause into your lease. This means that if you are breaking the lease due to being transferred again with your company, the apartment management company should wave the lease cancellation fees.



Ten Tips for Tenants

Know your rights when you rent a house or apartment.

1. Bring your paperwork.

The best way to win over a prospective landlord is to be prepared. To get a competitive edge over other applicants, bring the following when you meet the landlord: a completed rental application; written references from landlords, employers, and colleagues; and a current copy of your credit report.

HOW TO GET A COPY OF YOUR CREDIT REPORT

You can order your credit report by mail, phone, or online at www.annualcreditreport.com or directly from the websites of the three major national credit bureaus:

Equifax: www.equifax.com

Experian: www.experian.com

2. Review the lease.

Carefully review all of the conditions of the tenancy before you sign on the dotted line. Your lease or rental agreement may contain a provision that you find unacceptable -- for example, restrictions on guests, pets, design alterations, or running a home business.

3. Get everything in writing.

To avoid disputes or misunderstandings with your landlord, get everything in writing. Keep copies of any correspondence and follow up an oral agreement with a letter, setting out your understandings. For example, if you ask your landlord to make repairs, put your request in writing and keep a copy for yourself. If the landlord agrees orally, send a letter confirming this.

4. Protect your privacy rights.

Next to disputes over rent or security deposits, one of the most common and emotion-filled misunderstandings arises over the tension between a landlord's right to enter a rental unit and a tenant's right to be left alone. If you understand your privacy rights (for example, the amount of notice your landlord must provide before entering), it will be easier to protect them.

5. Demand repairs.

Know your rights to live in a habitable rental unit -- and don't give them up. The vast majority of landlords are required to offer their tenants livable premises, including adequate weatherproofing; heat, water, and electricity; and clean, sanitary, and structurally safe premises. If your rental unit is not kept in good repair, you have a number of options, ranging from withholding a portion of the rent, to paying for repairs and deducting the cost from your rent, to



calling the building inspector (who may order the landlord to make repairs), to moving out without liability for your future rent.

6. Talk to your landlord.

Keep communication open with your landlord. If there's a problem -- for example, if the landlord is slow to make repairs -- talk it over to see if the issue can be resolved short of a nasty legal battle.

7. Purchase renters' insurance.

Your landlord's insurance policy will not cover your losses due to theft or damage. Renters' insurance also covers you if you're sued by someone who claims to have been injured in your rental due to your carelessness. Renters' insurance typically costs \$350 a year for a \$50,000 policy that covers loss due to theft or damage caused by other people or natural disasters; if you don't need that much coverage, there are cheaper policies.

8. Protect your security deposit.

To protect yourself and avoid any misunderstandings, make sure your lease or rental agreement is clear on the use and refund of security deposits, including allowable deductions. When you move in, do a walk-through with the landlord to record existing damage to the premises on a move-in statement or checklist

9. Protect your safety.

Learn whether your building and neighborhood are safe, and what you can expect your landlord to do about it if they aren't. Get copies of any state or local laws that require safety devices such as deadbolts and window locks, check out the property's vulnerability to intrusion by a criminal, and learn whether criminal incidents have already occurred on the property or nearby. If a crime is highly likely, your landlord may be obligated to take some steps to protect you.

10. Deal with an eviction properly.

Know when to fight an eviction notice -- and when to move. If you feel the landlord is clearly is the wrong (for example, you haven't received proper notice, the premises are uninhabitable), you may want to fight the eviction. But unless you have the law and provable facts on your side, fighting an eviction notice can be short-sighted. If you lose an eviction lawsuit, you may end up hundreds (even thousands) of dollars in debt, which will damage your credit rating and your ability to easily rent from future landlords.



Staying Safe in Your Apartment

Safety is paramount when living in an apartment. Here are a few tips to make sure you've got all your safety bases covered.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors are a must. Many city and county laws state that detectors need to be maintained by the landlord; if you don't know if this is the law in your area, call your local fire marshal and find out. If detectors are required and your landlord is not doing so, give him/her a firm but polite reminder. If that doesn't work, you'll need to send a certified letter informing him/her that you are aware of the law and that you will be ensuring that the law is enforced. There should be a smoke detector in each room, especially bedrooms. However, it is your job to maintain the detectors inside your apartment. Check the batteries regularly and make sure it is installed correctly. No excuses!

In the event of a fire, you should make sure that you know what the emergency evacuation route is in your building. If you don't live on the first floor, find out where the nearest stairwell is and practice an emergency evacuation drill with your family or roommate.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, carbon monoxide poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning death in the United States. An odorless, tasteless, invisible gas, carbon monoxide can only be found with a detector. Depending on the law in your area, your building may or may not be required to provide these for your apartment. Regardless, this is another detector that you should definitely invest in. Test the alarm to be sure it is loud enough to wake you and be heard from other rooms. If your landlord has installed one or more, test and check their installation just as you would with smoke detectors.

Unwanted Critters

Mice, roaches and ants are probably not your ideal roommates. Many building codes require a monthly visit from a preventative exterminator to keep out vermin, so check with the code commissioner and then enforce this rule with your landlord. When you first move in, look for droppings and signs of previous pets—fleas are also considered vermin. The landlord is always responsible for clearing out vermin before you move in, but after that, it is your job to keep the apartment clean and do regular checks for infestations.

Federal Requirements

The federal government mandated in 1996 that property managers must inform tenants if lead based paint was used in the building. This type of paint was used in buildings as recently as 20 years ago and it is the leading cause of potential harm to children in urban areas. This paint is most dangerous when it chips and creates dust that can be inhaled. If you suspect that your apartment contains lead based paint, inform your landlord and allow the legal amount of time for removal.



The Basics of Renters Insurance

Thought you were covered by your landlord's insurance? Think again. You'll need renters insurance to protect your belongings from perils including theft, vandalism, fire and falling objects.

Renters face the same risk as homeowners in cases of disasters striking their home. Your landlord or condo association may have insurance, but this protects only the building, not your things in it. Renters insurance can protect your belongings in case of disaster.

There are several types of residential insurance policies. The HO-4 policy is designed for renters, while the HO-6 policy is for condo owners. Both HO-4 and HO-6 cover losses to your personal property from 16 types of perils:

- Fire or lightning
- Windstorm or hail
- Explosion
- Riot or civil commotion
- Damage caused by aircraft
- Damage caused by vehicles
- Smoke
- Vandalism or malicious mischief
- Theft
- Volcanic eruption
- Falling objects
- Weight of ice, snow or sleet
- From a plumbing, heating, air-conditioning or fire-protective sprinkler system, or from a household appliance: accidental discharge or overflow of water or steam; sudden and accidental tearing apart, cracking, burning or bulging; or freezing.
- Sudden and accidental damage from artificially generated electrical current (does not include loss to a tube, transistor or similar electronic component).
- Floods and earthquakes aren't on the list. If you live in an area prone to either, you'll need to buy a separate policy or a rider. In some coastal regions, where hurricanes might pose a threat, you might also need to buy a separate rider to cover wind damage.

Actual cash value vs. replacement cost

One thing to look at is whether the insurance company will offer "actual cash value" (ACV) or "replacement cost coverage" for your belongings. As the name implies, ACV coverage will pay only for what your property was worth at the time it was damaged or stolen. So, if you bought a television five years ago for \$500, it would be worth significantly less today. While you'd still need



to spend about \$500 for a new TV, your insurance company will pay only for what the old one is now worth, minus your deductible.

Replacement cost coverage, on the other hand, will pay what it actually costs to replace the items you lost, again minus the deductible.

In some regions, most insurers write ACV coverage. In others, they'll quote you replacement cost coverage by default. Replacement cost coverage will cost you more in premiums, but it will also pay out more if you ever need to file a claim.

Footing the bill when your home is unlivable

If your apartment or condominium becomes uninhabitable due to a fire, burst pipes, or any other reason covered by your policy, your insurance will cover your "additional living expenses." Generally, that means paying for you to live somewhere else.

This coverage has a limit of about 30 to 50 percent of the total value of the policy. So, if you're insured for \$100,000, your "additional living expenses" limit will be \$30,000 to \$50,000, depending on your policy terms.

Your insurance company will continue to pay while your home is being repaired or rebuilt, or until you permanently relocate. Sometimes 12 months is the longest an insurance company will continue paying. With some policies, you're limited to what the insurance company considers a "reasonable length of time."

Liability protection is also standard with most renters and condo policies. This means if someone in your unit slips and falls, you're covered for any costs, up to your liability limit. If this person sues you, you're covered for what they win in a court judgment as well as your legal expenses, up to your policy's limit.

Keeping your premium low

Just like any other type of homeowners insurance policy, your premium depends on a number of factors: where you live, your deductible, your insurance company, and whether you need any additional coverage.

There are ways to reduce your renters or condo owner's insurance bill.

- Increasing your deductible (the amount you pay before your coverage kicks in) is one strategy. Make sure you can afford whatever deductible you choose.
- If you're thinking about getting a dog, you might want to think twice. Some insurance companies are reluctant to write policies for owners of certain breeds.
- Some insurers might offer discounts to policyholders who are over age 55 and retired. Others might offer a discount if you buy both an auto and renters policy (called a multi-line discount).