Welcome to Your New Home

We are excited to welcome you to your new home. This handbook is designed to provide you with essential information to help you during your tenancy. While it covers many aspects of your lease, please remember that this is not a substitute for the actual lease agreement. The lease you signed is a legally binding document, and it is crucial that you familiarize yourself with its terms and conditions.

The Role of Property Management

We act as the liaison between the tenant and the landlord. We are contracted by the property owner to manage the enforcement of the lease agreement and to handle day-to-day operations. Our responsibilities include distributing rent payments, coordinating maintenance and repairs, and addressing any operational questions you may have about the property.

Please note that, as per our property management agreement, all communication should be directed through your property manager. We are the point of contact for all matters related to the property, and the landlord has specifically requested that we handle all tenant interactions.

Setting Expectations

While most tenancies proceed smoothly, we understand that issues can occasionally arise. Here are some key things to keep in mind:

- **Property Condition:** Unless otherwise specified in your lease, properties are provided in an "as-is" condition at the time of move-in. This means the property should be clean and free of debris. If there is anything you feel will impact the return of your security deposit, we will do our best to address it within the scope of your lease.
- **Requests Beyond the Lease:** If your request falls outside the terms of the lease, it will require landlord approval. We do not have the authority to approve or deny these types of requests. We will facilitate communication with the landlord, but the final decision rests with them.
- **Dispute Resolution:** While your lease agreement is comprehensive, it doesn't cover every potential situation. Sometimes, what one party views as a reasonable request may not be seen the same way by the other. If disagreements arise, we will strive to help find a resolution, but do not have the authority to make final decisions. In cases where an agreement cannot be reached, we may recommend consulting with an attorney for legal guidance.

Move-In Process

Keys & Access

Keys will be made available on the lease start date, no earlier. This will be addressed in your welcome email prior to your lease start date.

Important Note

Keys will not be provided until full payment for the first month's rent and security deposit has been received. Payments must be made by bank-issued checks, wire transfer, or online payment. We cannot release keys until funds have been cleared. This policy is strictly enforced. Proof of insurance is also required.

Insurance

As per your lease, you are required to have liability insurance. We also recommend you obtain renters insurance, which is a relatively affordable, is a way to protect your personal belongings in case of fire, theft, or water damage. Consult your insurance agent for details.

We must be listed as an additional insured or interested party on the policy. Please submit a copy of your policy via your portal. If we don't receive this information, we will purchase a policy for you at your expense.

Condominium Communities

If your new home is in a condominium, please be aware that many communities require advance scheduling for move-ins, including elevator reservations and move-in/out fees. These fees are your responsibility, so be sure to make arrangements ahead of time.

Utility Transfers

You are responsible for setting up utility accounts for services such as electricity, gas, and water. You will be provided this information in your welcome email.

Move In Inspection

Before you move in, we'll conduct an inspection of the property. This includes photographing the interior and exterior. If you notice any discrepancies or issues that may impact the return of your security deposit, please inform us within 5 days of your move-in. We will not accept claims beyond this period.

Rent Payment

Rent is due according to the terms of your lease. Rent is considered "paid" only when we receive it, not when it is sent. Online payment via a checking account is free. Credit card payments include a processing fee. Payment in any other manner will incur a $25 service charge to your tenant account.

Zero Tolerance Policy (Late Rent & Eviction)

Unless otherwise specified in your lease, rent is due by the 1st of each month. If rent is not received by COB on the 5th of the month, a late fee will apply, and you will receive a pay or quit notice. If the rent and late fees are paid as per this notice, no further action will be taken. However, if payment is not made, we will begin the eviction process, which may include attorney's fees.

Tenant and Owner Maintenance Responsibilities

HVAC Filters, Lawn Care, Cleaning

Tenants are responsible for maintaining a clean and sanitary living space, as well as performing routine maintenance such as changing light bulbs, smoke alarm batteries, refrigerator filters, replacing HVAC filters, and yard maintenance (unless included in the rent).

Your lease specifies your responsibilities for maintaining the property. Key items include:

- **HVAC Filters:** You must regularly change the filters in your HVAC system, which can range from 30 to 60 days depending on the filter type. Some filters may be washable. Failure to maintain the HVAC system could result in repair costs at your expense.
- **Yard Maintenance:** Unless otherwise stated in your lease, you are responsible for maintaining the yard. This includes mowing, trimming shrubs, watering, and removing weeds. Damage caused by neglect may result in charges.
- **Water Hose Bibs:** Before freezing temperatures, it's your responsibility to turn off all outside water hose bibs at the shut-off valve(s) inside the property. Failure to do so can result in broken pipes, for which you will be held financially liable.

Repairs

There are two types of repairs: routine and emergency.

- **Routine Repairs:** These are issues that don't significantly impact your daily life but still need attention, let us know, and we'll schedule a time for a contractor to address the problem.

- **Emergency Repairs:** Emergency repairs include issues such as no heat, no A/C, or water leaks. These are treated with urgency, and we will arrange for a contractor to come as soon as possible. However, please note that some repair schedules (especially for HVAC) can be delayed during peak seasons, like the first hot day of summer. Please call (703) 652-9040 for any emergency.

Temporary Housing Allowance

If your home's temperature falls below 62°F or exceeds 80°F for 24 hours or more due to HVAC issues, owners may offer a temporary housing allowance (up to 1/30th of your monthly rent per day). The same applies if you lose water service for over 24 hours. Receipts from local hotels are required for reimbursement. Utility interruptions due to storms or external factors are not the landlord's responsibility. This must be authorized in advance.

Properties with Pets

We understand that pets are part of the family, but they can also cause damage to a property if not well-managed. Pet damage and/or odor will be your responsibility. Severe damage may exceed your security and pet deposit. Please ensure your pet is well-behaved and not a nuisance to the community.

Only the pets listed in the lease are permitted. No additional pets are allowed without written approval.

Odor Management

You are responsible for ensuring the property is odor-free when vacating. This includes removing cooking smells, pet odors, or any lingering scents. In some cases, deep cleaning, painting, or duct cleaning may be necessary to eliminate odors. For this reason, we recommend using exhaust fans when cooking and ensuring proper ventilation. Smoking is strictly prohibited in any property.

Snow Removal Single Family Homes

It is your responsibility to clear sidewalks and driveways of snow and ice during the winter. Please avoid using harsh chemicals that could damage concrete surfaces. Follow the requirements of your HOA.

Return of Security Deposit

Your lease outlines the timeline for the return of your security deposit. We understand that getting your full deposit back is important to you, and we strive to return it in full, provided the property is left in good condition.

However, disputes often arise regarding what constitutes normal wear and tear versus damage. Some common areas where security deposit deductions may occur include:

- Damaged hardwood floors
- Scratches or dents on stainless steel appliances

Neighbor Relations

We all hope for harmonious neighbor relationships, but sometimes conflicts arise. If issues with neighbors occur, try resolving them amicably. If things escalate to the point where you need to involve the authorities, don't hesitate to contact the police or sheriff.

HOA Compliance

If your property is located in a Homeowners Association (HOA) or Condominium Association, you are required to comply with their rules and regulations. This includes policies regarding vehicle parking, trash removal, exterior maintenance, and more. Any fines incurred due to violations of these rules are your responsibility and must be rectified immediately.

Modifications to the Property (Paint, Wiring, Wall Hangings)

No modifications may be made to the property without prior written approval. This includes:

- Wall-mounted TVs
- painting or wallpapering rooms
- Excessive wall hangings or décor
- Installation of satellite dishes
- Moving or adding media outlets
- Planting or removing shrubs
- Installation of additional locks or security devices
- Installation of appliances and bidets
- Modification of flooring
- Altering plumbing or electrical systems
- Removal of fixtures or built in furniture
- Attaching items to exterior surfaces

Please seek written consent before making any changes to the property.

End of Lease Notification

Approximately 60 days before your lease expires, we will send you a notification reminding you of your upcoming lease end date. At this time, we'll need to know your intentions:

Do you wish to renew the lease or move out at the lease's conclusion? If you plan to stay, we'll coordinate with the landlord to confirm if they're open to an extension and whether there will be a rent increase.

If you decide not to renew, please note that the property legally may be listed for rent or sale during your tenancy. We appreciate your cooperation during this period, as we may need to show the property to prospective tenants or buyers.

Move Out Inspection

We will conduct the move out inspection within 3 days of your move-out. While your presence at the inspection is not required, you're welcome to attend. Please inform us in advance if you'd like to be present.

Move Out Process

To ensure a smooth move-out, please follow these important steps:

- Return of keys: Keys must be returned to the property management company by 5:00 PM on your move-out day. Refer to your lease for any additional move-out terms.
- Move out requirements: These typically include, but are not limited to:
- Professional carpet cleaning (receipt required)
- Removal of all personal property
- Gutter cleaning (for single-family homes and townhomes)
- Fireplace cleaning (if applicable, for wood-burning fireplaces)
- General cleaning of bathrooms, floors, counters, appliances, etc.
- Final lawn care and yard maintenance

- Do not attempt to patch walls or use touch-up paint: Any attempt to cover up damage could result in deductions from your security deposit.
- Utilities: If you vacate the property before your lease end date, do not turn off utilities until the day after your lease ends. Turning off utilities can lead to serious property damage, including frozen water pipes or a malfunctioning sump pump. you will be held responsible for any damages caused.
- Condominium Move out requirements: If you're in a condominium, there may be additional requirements such as advance move-out notice, elevator reservations, and/or a move-out fee. You will need to make these arrangements directly with the condo association.
- Burns or dents on countertops or cabinets
- Carpet stains or damage
- Excessive wear and tear on walls
- Damage to lawns or shrubs
- Strong odors (including pet, cooking, or tobacco odors)
- Cleanliness – inside cabinets, drawers, ceiling fans, blinds and baseboards

To avoid issues with your security deposit, here are a few maintenance tips:

- Use felt pads or floor protectors on furniture legs to prevent damage to hardwood floors.
- Avoid placing magnets or objects on stainless steel appliances that could cause scratches.
- Use only approved cleaners on stainless steel appliances.
- Regularly vacuum carpets and clean up spills immediately to avoid stains. Consider using products like Spot Shot for tough stains.
- Clean hardwood floors with approved products like Bona and avoid leaving water on the floor
- Water your lawn and shrubs regularly during hot or dry spells.

Treat the property as if it were your own home, and you'll be more likely to receive your full deposit back.

Landlord/Tenant Disputes

We will do our best to help resolve any disputes between you and the landlord. Our approach will always be guided by the terms outlined in your lease. If we're unable to help mediate a solution, we recommend that you seek legal advice for further resolution.

Flushable Wipes/Feminine Products

Please be aware that flushable wipes are not flushable! These items can cause significant clogs in plumbing systems and should not be flushed. Always dispose of these items in the trash to avoid plumbing issues, which could result in costly repairs to you. For your convenience and to prevent damage, please be cautious of what you flush down the toilet.

Bidets Installation and Responsibility

If you wish to install a bidet, it must be professionally installed by a licensed plumber to ensure it meets safety and plumbing standards, and owner approval is required. While bidets can provide convenience, any damage resulting from improper use or failure to maintain the bidet system (including issues with the plumbing or clogging) will be the tenant's responsibility. Tenants are expected to use the bidet properly. Should any repairs be required on a tenant installed bidet due to misuse or neglect, the tenant will be held liable for the cost of repairs. Any bidets previously installed in the home are the responsibility of the owner.

Tenant and Owner Maintenance Obligations

In addition to the general responsibilities outlined in your lease, both the tenant and the owner have specific obligations regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the premises. Maintenance and repairs must be completed by licensed and insured professionals, in a timely and workmanlike manner, to ensure that the property remains in good condition. Below is a breakdown of the responsibilities of both parties.

Owner Maintenance Obligations

The Owner is responsible for maintaining the following components of the property at their expense:

1. **Foundation:** Ensuring the structural integrity of the building's foundation.
2. **Structure:** Exterior walls and the core structural elements of the premises.
3. **HVAC Systems:** Heating and air conditioning systems provided by the owner.
4. **Main Systems:** Water, sewer, gas, and electrical lines behind walls and underground (both inside and outside).
5. **Electrical Systems:** Internal and external wiring for lights, outlets, and other electrical components.
6. **Appliances:** Refrigerator, stove/oven, cooktop, dishwasher, microwave, garbage disposal, gas fireplace, washer and dryer
7. **Sprinkler System**: Maintenance and repair of the main pipes, valves, timers, and connections.
8. **Water Softener Systems:** Maintenance, repair and replacement if needed (Salt is a tenant responsibility)
9. **Plumbing:** Water lines behind walls, under sinks, and underground (both inside and outside).
10. **Water Heater:** Ensuring proper functioning of the water heater.
11. **Garage Door Opener:** Maintenance and repair of the opener, track, and core systems.
12. **Exterior Decking:** The structure of the deck, unless damaged by the tenant.

Tenant Maintenance Obligations

The tenant is responsible for the following maintenance tasks and costs. Please read your lease for further clarification.

1. **Non-Owner Responsibilities:** Anything not listed under owner's obligations, as well as items damaged by the Tenant, are the tenant's responsibility.
2. **Plumbing:** The tenant is responsible for clogged toilets, sinks, and tubs. Tenant installed bidets and any issues arising from their installation or use are the responsibility of the tenant.
3. **Air Filters:** The tenant must replace HVAC filters every 60 days. Failure to do so could lead to mechanical breakdowns, for which the tenant will be financially responsible.
4. **Telecommunication Lines:** The tenant is responsible for all phone, internet, cable, and low-voltage lines, both inside and outside the premises.
5. **Carpet Cleaning:** The tenant must vacuum carpets regularly and professionally clean them as needed. At move out, professional carpet cleaning is required per the terms of your lease and will be done at the tenant's expense.
6. **Garage Door Remotes:** The tenant must maintain and replace remotes and batteries as needed.
7. **Fireplace:** If applicable, the Tenant is responsible for regular cleaning and maintenance of wood burning fireplaces.
8. **Water Softener Systems:** The tenant is responsible for regular maintenance and purchasing salt unless noted in your lease.
9. **Windows & Window Coverings:** The tenant must clean and maintain windows and screens, as well as repair any broken window glass or torn screens and replace any torn blinds.
10. **Closet Shelving:** Tenants are responsible for reattaching any closet shelving that disconnects from the wall during use.
11. **Light Bulbs:** The tenant is responsible for replacing light bulbs.
12. **Smoke/CO_2 Detectors:** The tenant is responsible for changing batteries in smoke and CO_2 detectors.
13. **Pests:** The tenant is responsible for pest control, including the extermination of insects, rodents, and other pests.
14. **Yard & Landscaping:** If applicable (houses/townhouses) - The tenant must maintain the yard by mowing, trimming shrubbery, watering, and keeping the exterior free of weeds and debris. Snow and ice removal is the tenant's responsibility, unless specified otherwise in the lease.
15. **Slip, Trip, Fall Hazards:** The tenant is responsible for maintaining a safe living environment, including removing any slip, trip, or fall hazards around the property.
16. **Contractor Trip Fee:** Tenant is responsible for any fees associated with any missed prescheduled appointments with owners, vendors or Property Management should they apply.

17. **General Guidelines:** The tenant agrees to follow home maintenance best practices. For example, flushable wipes, diapers, or toys can clog toilets, leading to costly repairs. The tenant will be charged for any maintenance issues caused by improper use.

Exterior Maintenance Responsibilities

The tenant has specific duties when it comes to the exterior of the property:

1. **Faucets & Hose Bibs:** The tenant must turn off exterior hose bibs to prevent freezing and breakage. If pipes burst due to non-compliance, the Tenant will be responsible for repairs.
2. **Snow & Ice Removal:** The tenant is responsible for snow and ice removal unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the Owner or HOA.
3. **Swimming Pool/Hot Tub:** If applicable, the Tenant is responsible for maintaining the pool or hot tub, including cleaning.

Additional Notes on Maintenance

- **Garbage Disposals:** The tenant is prohibited from disposing of inappropriate items (e.g., bones, corn cobs, glass) in garbage disposals. Doing so may cause damage that the Tenant will be responsible for.
- **Electrical Safety:** The tenant should avoid overloading electrical sockets or extension cords to prevent damage or create fire hazards.
- **Plumbing Misuse:** The tenant must refrain from flushing inappropriate items down the toilet. If a plumber is called out to fix issues caused by misuse, the Tenant will be billed for the repairs.

This breakdown outlines the Tenant's and owner's responsibilities, ensuring that both parties are aware of their obligations to keep the property in good condition. It is important for the Tenant to maintain the property in a way that prevents damage and ensures its habitability throughout the lease term.

Keys/Lock Out

In the event of a lock out, it is the tenant's responsibility to contact a locksmith at their expense for services.

Locks

Tenant cannot change or install locks without written permission from the landlord, and a copy of the new keys being provided to the management company.

No Oral Agreements

No oral agreements between the tenant and owner will be valid. The lease is the entire agreement between the parties, and any modifications must be in writing and signed by all involved parties. All previous agreements are superseded by this lease and any addendums.

Any misstatements made in the rental application may result in immediate termination of occupancy.

Tenants cannot withhold rent or offset it except where allowed by law.

Joint & Severability

All leases are jointly responsible for meeting the terms of the agreement, including rent and statutory damages. No tenant can be released from this agreement without the owner's written consent and consent of other leases.

Alterations to the Premises

No alterations may be made to the Premises without prior written approval from the owner. This includes installing lighting fixtures, or any other modifications. Any approved alterations become the property of the owner upon lease termination, unless otherwise specified.

Received by: ……
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