

10 Things Every Tenant Should Know.

Tip #1: Your Lease is a Legal Contract

You are entering into a contract with your landlord. This means you and your landlord are making an agreement that can be enforced in court. Read your lease closely and keep a copy of it.

Tip #2: Being A Tenant Is A Responsibility

Keep your rental clean and safe, inside and out. Take out your trash, keep plumbing clean, and be reasonable about your use of electricity, AC, heating, and appliances.

Do not damage any part of your rental or let guests cause damage. Do not disturb other tenants. You can be held responsible for the actions of your guests.

Tip #3: Good Communication With Your Landlord Is Important

Communicate with your landlord early and often. Your lease should identify your landlord by name, address, and phone number. Talk to your landlord if you have a concern or an issue. And, make repair requests in writing. The earlier the better! Keep records of your communications with your landlord or property manager.

Tip #4: You Have a Right To Fair Housing

You have rights and protections before you even sign a lease. Landlords cannot refuse to rent to you based on your race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or family status. If you think that your landlord is violating fair housing laws, contact the Southwest Fair Housing Council at 1-888-624-4611 or at <http://swfhc.com/contact-us>.

Tip #5: Your Landlord Cannot Discriminate Against You Because of Disability

A landlord cannot refuse to rent to you because you are disabled or because of the disability of a family member or someone else living with you. A landlord must make reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities. If you think your landlord is discriminating against you because of a disability, or if you have questions about your rights as a disabled tenant, contact the Arizona Center for Disability Law at (520) 327-9547 or at <https://www.azdisabilitylaw.org/contact-us/>.

Tip #6: If Your Rental Needs Repairs, You Must Give Your Landlord Notice In Writing

Never withhold rent if your rental needs repairs. If you would like your landlord to repair something in your rental, you must make this request in writing. If you want to complete the repairs yourself, there are certain steps you must follow first. See the handout titled "What Is Habitability" for more information.



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Tip #7: The Eviction Timeline Moves Fast – Do Not Ignore An Eviction Notice

A landlord will give you a 5 or 10-day notice, depending on why you are being evicted.

- Notices sent by certified mail are considered to be received even if you don't open them.
- The court will set a hearing 3 – 6 days after the landlord files an eviction action.
- If the court rules against you, the court will also enter a “writ of restitution,” which is a court order that allows the constable or sheriff to remove you from your rental. The constable or sheriff may be allowed to remove you as soon as 6 days after your eviction hearing.
- If you think you may be facing an eviction, reach out for legal advice as soon as possible. You may have a defense if the eviction notice was not properly served, or if the eviction complaint does not contain all the required information.

Tip #8: There Are Community Resources That Can Help With Eviction

There are rental assistance programs to help pay your rent, and free legal services to help you defend against an eviction. Make sure to take advantage of these resources as soon as you think you may be facing eviction.

- Visit Pima County's list of organizations that provide help with housing issues: <https://www.pimacountyhousingsearch.org/Resources.html>. These organizations have specific requirements and limited funds, so don't wait to apply! As soon as you think you may need help, reach out.
- Apply for services through Step Up to Justice by emailing scheduling@stepuptojustice.org or apply on our website at <http://www.stepuptojustice.org/apply-for-help>

Tip #9: Skipping Your Eviction Hearing Will Not Make The Eviction Go Away

If you do not attend your hearing, you will be evicted, and you may not be able to ask another court to review that decision. Your landlord can get an eviction judgment against you even if you are not in court! Make sure you show up to your hearing even if you are still looking for resources to help. You may also be able to “continue” or delay your court date by up to 3 days if you show good cause for the delay.

Tip #10: Eviction Judgments Have Lasting Consequences

Your landlord can use an eviction judgment to garnish (take money from) your wages. Eviction judgments stay on your credit report for seven years. An eviction judgment on your credit report can make it difficult to rent again. You can request a free copy of your credit report once a year from www.annualcreditreport.com.