



Rentals 101



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Thank you for your interest in our rental assistance services. The information provided in this packet will assist you in renting an apartment or a home in your new location. We have provided 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 GMS Relocation Coach, at 1-800-617-1904.

Prior to starting your search for an apartment in your new area, you might want to consider a few questions to help you narrow your search.

- What are the things I cannot live without in my new home? (I.e. on site 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?

Rental Resources

Below you will find some websites that have been helpful to our clients:

Special GMS Rental Website:

- www.cort.com/clients/virtual/GMS

Apartment & Home Rental Search Websites:

- www.apartments.com (apartments only)
- www.forrent.com (apartments only)
- www.rent.com
- www.rentals.com
- www.rentalhouses.com
- www.realtor.com (select rentals)
- www.trulia.com
- www.zillow.com

Classified Listings:

- www.craigslist.org
- www.thepaperboy.com (listings of local newspaper websites)

Do you need to rent furniture for your apartment?

If you experience any difficulty locating apartment complexes with fully furnished apartments, you might want to consider renting furniture. 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 them offer flexible financing such as monthly installments. Below you will find a list of furniture rental websites:

- www.cortfurniture.com

- www.rentacenter.com
- www.aaronrents.com
- www.bfr.com

Things to Know When Touring

What to bring with you:

- Driver's License or official identification card
- Social Security Card
- W-2 Form for annual wages
- Last 3 payroll stubs (An offer letter that includes salary 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 two years of residence

If you will be touring multiple apartment communities or houses:

- Take pictures of each property and apartment, so that you can review your options at the end of the day
- Request 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

11 Tips for Tenants

1. Bring your paperwork

Preparation is the key when meeting with a landlord. In order to gain a competitive edge over other applicants and expedite the process consider bringing the following items to your first meeting:

- Completed rental application
- Written references from previous landlords, employers, and colleagues
- Current copy of your credit report

2. How to get a copy of your credit report

You can order a free credit report through www.annualcreditreport.com for any or all of these credit bureaus.

- Equifax: www.equifax.com

- Transunion: www.transunion.com
- Experian: www.experian.com

3. Review the lease

Review all of the conditions of the tenancy before you sign the lease. It may contain a provision that you find unacceptable, for example restrictions on guests, pets, design alterations, or operating a home based business.

4. Get everything in writing

To avoid disputes or misunderstandings with your landlord, get everything in writing. Maintain copies of any correspondence or oral agreements with a letter that documents the agreement. For example, if you ask your landlord to make repairs; put your request in writing and retain a copy. Once the landlord agrees, respond in writing with confirmation of the agreed upon repair(s).

5. Protect your right to privacy

One of the most common disputes between a landlord and tenant is a landlord's right to enter a rental unit. In an effort to avoid any misunderstandings, you should research the state laws in your area on the proper amount of notice the landlord must give before entering and ensure it is stated in the lease.

6. Request repairs and complete a move-in inspection form

The vast majority of landlords are required to offer their tenants habitable premises, including adequate weatherproofing; heat, water, and electricity; and clean, sanitary, and structurally safe premises.

Prior to moving in, complete a move-in inspection form that documents the condition of the home or apartment at that time. For example, if there is a chip in the tile or counter surface when you move in, you do not want to be responsible for that when moving out. It is also recommended that you take pictures as well for further supporting documentation.

If your rental unit is not kept in good repair during your lease period, 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. You will want to research tenant rights in the area to ensure you are informed on what the proper recourse is for disputed repairs.

7. Lease termination language

In a corporate relocation 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 high lease cancellation fee. Request that a "transfer clause" be inserted into your lease. The "transfer clause" should state that in the event you terminate the lease due to a corporate relocation, the lease cancellation fee is waived.

8. Purchase renters' insurance

Your landlord's insurance policy will not cover a loss due to theft, fire, or vandalism. Renters' insurance typically costs \$12 a month for \$30,000 of property coverage and \$100,000 of liability coverage.

9. Protect your security deposit

In an effort to avoid a misunderstanding at the end of the lease period, you will want to ensure that your rental agreement is clear on the use and refund of security deposits.

10. Protect your safety

Thoroughly research local ordinances regarding the requirement of safety devices such as deadbolts, window locks, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in single family dwellings. The landlord may be obligated to install some safety equipment for further protection of you and your family.

11. Deal with an eviction properly

Determine when it is to your advantage to fight an eviction notice and when it is better to move on. If you believe the landlord is in the wrong (for example, you haven't received proper notice, the premises are uninhabitable), you may want to fight the eviction. However, unless you have the law and irrefutable facts on your side, fighting an eviction notice can be short-sighted. If you lose an eviction lawsuit, you may end up owing hundreds (even thousands) of dollars, which could damage your credit rating and may negatively impact your ability to rent in the future.

Staying Safe in Your Apartment

Safety is a priority when living in an apartment. Here are a few tips to make sure you have addressed all of the common safety concerns:

- **Smoke Detectors** - Many local ordinances and state laws require smoke detectors. Regularly check the batteries to confirm they are working properly. In the event of a fire, you should ensure that you and your family are aware of the emergency evacuation route in your building.
- **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. It is an odorless and tasteless gas; therefore it can only be identified with a detector. Depending on the law in your area, your building may be required to provide these for your apartment. If your landlord has installed one or more, ensure the batteries are replaced periodically.
- **Pest Control** - 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 signs of infestation. The landlord is responsible for any infestation prior to move in.
- **Lead Based Paint** - The federal government mandated in 1996 that landlords 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