

# THE PROACTIVE TENANT'S CHECKLIST

## Before You Sign a Lease:

- Read your lease.
- Take extra time to look over anything titled "NON-STANDARD RENTAL PROVISION."
- Negotiate with your landlord to change or eliminate provisions of the lease that you cannot comply with.
- Visit the apartment and inspect it for damages.
- Choose responsible roommates.

## Upon Move-In:

- Make a written list of damages to the apartment on a check-in form or on your own. (Be thorough.)
- Take pictures of the apartment to document its condition.
- If you want, you can request from your landlord a copy of any withholdings he or she made from the prior tenant's security deposit.

## Throughout Your Tenancy:

- Make timely rent payments.
- Notify your landlord if there are maintenance problems with your apartment. If the problem is serious or your landlord is unresponsive, you can also call the City of Madison Building Inspector at (608) 266-4551.

- Document issues you bring to your landlord's attention. (This can be as simple as communicating with your landlord via email, or jotting down notes about any calls to your landlord and what your landlord did in response.)

## Before You Move Out:

- Review the move-out requirements included in your lease.
- Clean apartment as required by your lease.
- Remove all of your belongings.
- Take pictures of the apartment.
- Move-out before your lease ends.
- Leave a forwarding address with your landlord or update your address with the United States Postal Service (USPS).

## After You Move Out:

- Return your keys in the manner described in your lease.
- If you move out a few days before the end of your lease term, notify your landlord in writing once you are out.
- Look for your security deposit accounting or return from your landlord 21 days after you move out.
- When you receive your security deposit or accounting, save the envelope if you are considering contesting the amount withheld.



**The Neighborhood  
Law Clinic**

The Neighborhood Law Clinic (NLC) provides free legal information and in some cases representation to residents of Dane County and surrounding areas. The NLC is part of the University of Wisconsin Law School. NLC clients receive legal services from law students, who are supervised by attorneys.

NLC can help with legal problems involving housing, employment or public benefits. Examples of housing issues that the NLC can help with include the following: your landlord is trying to evict you; you believe your landlord has illegally kept your security deposit; your apartment has maintenance or repair issues that have not been properly resolved after you called the city building inspector.

If you think you have a problem that needs legal attention and you want to set up an appointment with the NLC, please call us at (608) 265-2441.