



The Facts about...

Tenant's Rights

How do I know if the unit I am renting is in compliance with city code?

Under the Rental Unit Conservation Law all landlords are responsible for obtaining a Certificate of Compliance. This certificate is a statement that the rental unit, for which the certificate was issued, meets the general licensing ordinance, the Zoning ordinance, the Property Maintenance Code and other applicable standards. It is unlawful to operate any apartment house, rooming house, two-family dwelling, or a single rental unit without a current certificate of compliance.

These certificates of compliance are public documents. They can be viewed at the Office of Neighborhood Services. If you are curious about your current unit, or a unit you are interested in renting, feel free to call us. We can confirm if the rental unit has a current Certificate of Compliance.

I have a complaint against my landlord. What can the city do to help me?

The Office of Neighborhood Services is happy to help with all complaints involving building code violations. Before you file a complaint we encourage you to contact your landlord. The landlord might not be aware of the problem, and many problems can be fixed without involving us.

When you are ready to file a complaint you can stop in the Office of Neighborhood Services in the third floor of City Hall or complete a form online. Included on this form is your information and details about your complaint. The complaint will then be given to an inspector from ONS. We like to address all complaints as soon as possible and will want to schedule an inspection within 24 hours. After an inspector fully investigates the complaint the inspector will notify the landlord of any violations that need to be addressed. A re-inspection date is set to ensure that all problems are fixed. Landlords may be prosecuted in municipal court if violations exist.

The Rental Unit Conservation Law applies within the City of Columbia and not to property located outside the city limits.

What issues are civil matters that the city can't help with?

The Office of Neighborhood Services does not handle civil matters between a landlord and tenant. Civil matters include but are not limited to lease renewals, rent review and recovery, assignments and subleasing, recovery of possession, enforcement of covenants, recovery of service charges, leasehold enfranchisements, and unlawful eviction. We suggest reading all lease agreements carefully, talking to all individuals involved in the problem, and seeking advice from a lawyer.

Tenant/Landlord rights/responsibilities

General obligations of tenants

Tenants should:

- Pay rent on time.
- Use reasonable care and not damage property.
- Properly dispose of garbage.
- Refrain from taking on additional occupants or subleasing without the landlord's written permission.

General obligations of landlords

Landlords should:

- Make property habitable before tenants move in.
- Make and pay for repairs due to ordinary wear and tear.
- Refrain from turning off a tenant's water, electricity or gas.
- Provide written notice to tenants when ownership of the property is transferred to a new landlord.
- Not unlawfully discriminate.

More information can be found on the Missouri Attorney General's website at <https://ago.mo.gov/civil-division/consumer/landlord-tenant-law> or by calling 573-751-3321.

How can I research utility costs?

Your payment to your landlord is one cost of renting but utilities can also be a large part of your living expenses. We encourage you to find out more about the cost of utilities as part of deciding where to rent. Learn tips for energy conservation by visiting www.CoMo.gov and searching "Energy Efficient Rental Homes."

What are the rules about occupancy limits?

The City's zoning ordinance includes a definition of family and also states the number of unrelated people who can live together in a unit. Properties zoned R-1 or in a PD with a density of 5 units or less per acre can have three unrelated occupants and all other zoning districts can have four unrelated occupants. Tenants can be issued a summons if they are violating these occupancy limits.

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