

# The Rights of a Tenant



The landlord relies on the tenant to pay rent, and the tenant trusts the landlord to maintain the property in good condition. Knowing your rights as a tenant and knowing what the landlord has a right to expect from you is one of the best ways to avoid a possible dispute. There are state laws that protect the tenant and the landlord. You can look up laws for any situation on the following Internet website:

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/catenant.pdf>

## Important Tenant Rights and Expectations:

- **Right to Privacy:** The landlord cannot enter your home without permission unless there is an emergency, such as a fire or bursting pipes.
- **Right to Repairs:** Everyone has a right to safe and healthy living conditions. The law says that the landlord is responsible for making repairs and keeping the property in proper condition.
- **Paying Rent on Time:** The rent is due on the day specified in the rental agreement, otherwise there may be an additional late charge. If the tenant continues to owe rent, the landlord can serve the tenant a three-day notice.
- **Rent or Deposit Increase:** The landlord cannot raise the amount of the rent during the term of the lease. If the lease is month-to-month, the landlord needs to give at least a 30-day advance written notice. They need to give you at least 60-days advance notice if the rent increase is greater than 10 percent.

## Deposit

Most apartments will require you to leave a deposit as a precaution. You need to leave the rental clean and undamaged so you can receive the deposit back. You should write down any defects that exist before moving in so you will not get charged for any repairs that are were not your responsibility. After you move out, the landlord must pay the full deposit back within **21 days** if the rental was left in the same condition. If you don't receive the entire amount, the landlord needs to give a written notification on how the deposit had to be spent to clean or repair the rental.

## Complaining to the Landlord

Give your complaints to the landlord or property manager in writing. The law requires proof that the tenant has informed the landlord of the need for repairs before the tenant can take other action. Keep a copy of any letters you send to your landlord, and a record of any phone conversations with your landlord.

## Housing Authority

The Imperial Valley Housing Authority is a public agency that offers a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to low-income residents. Although there is an extensive waiting list for

IMPERIAL VALLEY REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM  
ACCESSING CAREERS THROUGH EDUCATION

housing services, sometimes priority is given to former foster youth applicants. Applicants need to provide a letter from Social Services stating you have “emancipated” within a month of your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to be given special priority. You need to provide proof of permanent employment and locate your own studio or apartment when you are awarded the assistance. Here are the 2 most common Housing Authority programs:

**Section 8:** This program assists applicants by paying a portion of their rent that is based on a percentage of their income. You can look for a rental unit of your choice and also transfer the assistance to other cities.

**Public Housing:** These are affordable rental units that are owned and rented by Housing Authority. The units range from 1-bedroom apartments to five bedroom homes and are located throughout the County.