

Renter/Tenant Rights



NOTE: These rights only apply if you fall under the protections of the Virginia Residential Landlord Tenant Act, Sections 55.248.2 to 56.248.40 of the Virginia Code. Some renters of townhouses, duplexes, and detached homes do not qualify.

For more information contact Student Legal Services at (540) 231-4720 in 143 Squires Student Center, or online at www.legal.sga.vt.edu

What Your Rights Include:

- **You have the right to a fair application fee.**
If your application is rejected and you paid over \$32 in application fees, the landlord must provide repayment promptly.
- **You have the right to a fair security deposit.**
A landlord cannot ask for more than two months rent as a security deposit, and it must be refunded within 45 days of moving out if no deductions are charged. If deductions are charged, they must be accompanied by a detailed, itemized list describing the charges.
- **You have the right to privacy.**
Your landlord cannot disclose information about you except in certain cases; such as emergencies, subpoenas, or summaries of your payment record (including the amount).
- **You have the right to notification of a change in management/ownership, or change of property for other use.**
You must be notified within six months if you will be evicted as a result of demolition/rehabilitation of the property, or if it is being changed into an office, hotel, or planned unit development.
- **You have the right to a decent and safe place to live, and a certain level of security.**
The landlord must ensure that local building and health codes are followed, necessary repairs are made, and routine maintenance is followed. Proper locks on doors and windows must be provided, and you should be allowed to install anti-theft devices as long as they do not permanently damage the property.
- **You have the right to proper notice before pesticides are applied to your apartment.**
The landlord must notify you at least 48 hours in advance.
- **You have the right to proper notice of a rent increase or a decrease in services.**
If you signed a lease, these changes cannot be made until the lease expires. If you rent from month-to-month, 30 days notice is required. If you rent week-to-week, 7 days notice is necessary.
- **You have the right to a proper eviction notice.**
If eviction is for not paying rent, then you have 5 days to pay before the landlord is entitled to take you to court. However, if you do not have a lease agreement you can be evicted for any reason with 30 days notice.
- **You have the right to speak out.**
You cannot be punished for complaining about the property or joining a renters association.

Fair Housing

Fair housing is fair opportunity. They protect everyone from discrimination against race, sex, gender, disability, or presence of children under 18. Landlords must offer the same rental price to all applicants interested in a particular property regardless. Typically, discrimination will occur in the form of telling a minority couple that a higher deposit is required than a white couple would be offered, or telling one person that units are available and telling the next person they are not. If you believe you are the victim of a housing discrimination, contact the US department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at (800) 669-9777, or