

07.15.09 (last revised)

Tenant Handbook
for
Markstahler Properties
This Handbook is part of the lease.

***Property management for Markstahler Properties is
provided by MBT Property Management 398-0906***

A Handy Summary Page

1. For routine maintenance items and other business matters call 352 – 3498. This is a business telephone. It has an answering machine on it 24 hours a day. If you reach the answering machine remember to give your full name, your address, your telephone number and the nature of your call. Please leave the time and date of your call.
2. Remember emergencies are very few in nature. They are limited to a few items:
 - ✓ **A burst pipe that is causing water damage**
 - ✓ **A furnace that has gone out in freezing temperatures**
 - ✓ **Storm damage**
 - ✓ **Electrical outlets that are smoking and or sparking**

For weekends or after hours only when one of the four items above happen telephone 217 – 649 - 6301

3. **FIRE OR CRIME should be *immediately* reported by telephoning 911. After the authorities have been contacted you should report property damage to us. If it happens on weekends or after hours and the property needs to be secured contact 217- 649 - 6301**
4. Rent is due on the First of the Month and **is considered paid late on and after the 6th of the month.** We reserve the right to charge a late fee of \$50.00 for every month that the rent is paid late.
5. We prefer that rent be paid during business hours Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 108 W. Columbia Champaign. Suite B (on the east side off the driveway – park in Customer Parking). If no one is present you may drop the rent in the mail slot. Please make certain that it is in a sealed envelope with both your name and address on it and the phrase rent for (your Address) for (the month of). Please ***do not put cash*** in the mail slot. We do not accept cash as rent payments – either check or money order only. If you prefer to mail your check please mail it to our P.O. Box 587 Champaign, IL 61824-0587.

Markstahler Properties Tenant Handbook

Introduction - please read carefully!

Welcome to your new home. To make certain that both you and we at Markstahler Properties start out on the right foot and continue to have a good relationship during the term of your lease we have prepared this handbook. The **Tenant Handbook** is designed to answer most of your questions and to be a guide for the care of the property that you are leasing. The handbook is part of the lease and thus its requirements are part of the terms of your lease.

The main reason that a landlord takes the financial risk to invest money in a rental property is to earn a better return on the money renting the property than if he put the money into another investment. To protect this investment it is necessary that the landlord take steps to find good tenants who will pay their rent on time, take good care of his property, and be good citizens and neighbors in the neighborhood. It is also incumbent upon the landlord to make provisions to monitor the property regularly and to stay active in its management.

The reasons that an individual chooses to rent are varied. In any case the tenant is only leasing the property from the landlord in exchange for regular monthly rent payments for a fixed time period. It is not their property to do with as they wish. It is their responsibility to take good care of the property while it is under their control and to make on time payment of the rent. Within these limits it is their right to make the property their home and enjoy the benefits afforded by renting.

The purpose of a written lease is to put into writing the specific responsibilities and obligations of both the landlord and the tenant so that each shall know what are theirs and what are the other's duties and rights. The lease is a written covenant between the two. The landlord's responsibility is to provide a quality residence for the tenant at the monthly rent price shown in the lease and to abide by the terms of the lease. The tenant's responsibility is to be a good caretaker of the landlord's property, to pay the rent on time and to abide by the terms of the lease. Both the landlord and the tenant should leave a place better than they find it.

THE LANDLORD By owning property in a neighborhood the landlord has made an implied commitment to the neighborhood to support and strengthen the neighborhood. This is done by first making certain that the property is well maintained both outside and inside and that the grounds that come with the property are kept neat. The landlord also has a responsibility to strive to rent only to individuals who will be good citizens and neighbors in the neighborhood. The landlord also has the responsibility to be a good landlord by providing a well-maintained quality living environment to his tenants.

The landlord also has an implied responsibility to the other landholders and the residents in the neighborhood to help with efforts to sustain and strengthen the neighborhood and to monitor his own property and his tenants to insure that they do not harm the neighborhood. Generally the landlord's property should be among the most well kept properties in the area. The landlord should always remember that what for him is primarily a for profit financial investment is in a neighborhood and on a street where citizens are homeowners. Home ownership is part of the American dream.

No landlord has the right to turn that dream into a nightmare by not being a good steward of property he owns in a residential neighborhood. When a landlord purchases property to rent for profit in a residential neighborhood of primarily single family homes he implicitly commits himself to be held to a higher community standard than landlords with property in areas that primarily are developed with multi-family properties.

THE TENANT By choosing a particular residence to rent the tenant also is picking a neighborhood in which to live. By doing so the tenant makes an implied commitment and covenant to support and strengthen the neighborhood. This is done in both formal and informal ways.

PAGE TWO

First among these is respecting the rights of others in the neighborhood. The most basic of these is to never engage in criminal activity in the neighborhood or to provide help, aid, or comfort to those who do engage in criminal activity. Respecting the rights of your neighbors also means small things such as: not playing loud music after dark either outside or inside so that it can be heard outside, not having parties or friends over later in the evening or at night where conversations or other noise can be heard outside or the sounds of vehicles coming and going might disturb the quiet, discouraging friends from sitting outside of your home honking their horn for you rather than coming to the door, providing good supervision of your children and the children visiting at your home, and by picking up litter in your yard, the sidewalks, and the street in front of your home every day. It means keeping the yard, driveway, porches, and decks clean and free of junk and inoperable items.

It also means participating in community and neighborhood groups such as the PTA, neighborhood watches and neighborhood associations. Informally it means getting to know and helping out neighbors - checking up on older neighbors, keeping watch out for other neighbor's children and watching neighbor's homes when they are not at home.

The tenant should always remember that they are living in a neighborhood of homeowners. By choosing this kind of a neighborhood you have a higher obligation to your neighbors and to yourself and your own family than if you were living in a neighborhood of apartment buildings.

The following is a detailed articulation of some of the more general ideas outlined above. It is intended to clarify the commitment that both parties, landlord and tenant, are establishing by signing this lease.

Good clean condition and normal wear and tear:

When we turn over a property to a tenant we have endeavored to make certain that it is both clean and free of insect infestations. We do not rent a property as is. We are proud of our units. We expect our tenants to be also. It is important to us that our tenants are good housekeepers. The outline below is the standard we set for ourselves as to the condition of the property when we turn it over to you. It is also the standard we set my lease as to the condition of the property when you turn it back to us. If these conditions are not met you have the costs of and cleaning required to bring the property to these conditions charged against your deposit.

- In our lease we use the phrase "in good clean condition". In Good clean condition means:
- that wood and vinyl floors are swept clean, mopped with clean soapy water and waxed and buffed as required
 - carpeting is shampooed with a commercial shampooer
 - windows are cleaned with window cleaner
 - all cabinets vanities and shelves are wiped out with a disinfecting cleaner (such as PineSol)
 - sinks and tubs cleaned to a shine; all toilets are cleaned and disinfected on all surfaces inside and out
 - all light fixtures are cleaned and free of insects or other debris
 - the stove is clean and free of all dirt and grease both on the top and inside the oven and broiler
 - the refrigerator is clean on all surfaces inside and out
 - all vents for the heat are clean of dirt and dust
 - all flat surfaces, corners, etc. are free of dirt, dust and cobwebs
 - ceiling fan blades are clean
 - all garbage and debris is removed from the house including such items as hangers in the closet
 - the yard is free of all litter
 - walls and ceilings are free of nails, marks, cobwebs etc

On rare occasions we may negotiate out a different agreement with a tenant on the condition of the unit when they move in. This will always be put into writing and attached to the lease. In all other cases we expect that a unit will be maintained by the tenant in the condition that they first found it in and that it will be returned at the end of the lease period in the same condition.

PAGE THREE

A standard term in rental properties is “normal wear and tear”. This basically means normal wear to the fiber of a carpet and some marks on painted walls due to decorative items being hung. This is important to know because anything beyond you will be expected to pay for.

Carpet Care

Modern carpet is stain resistant but needs to be protected and it needs routine care. We suggest the following when caring for carpet in your unit:

- When it is snowing, raining, or the ground is wet and or muddy outside require your family and visitors to remove their shoes prior to walking on the carpet.
- Vacuum the carpets once a week, modern carpet fibers will be damaged by built up dirt.
- Wait for anything such as dirt to dry then brush it off and vacuum.
- Dab up spills with a damp paper towel or cloth if needed spot clean with a product such as Woolite spray Spot and Stain Remover following the direction on the can.
- Shampoo as needed periodically, or as the result of spills.
- Place coasters under the legs of furniture to keep them from crushing the pile in the carpet.
- Never iron directly on the carpet and avoid dropping cigarettes on the carpet. Most modern carpet is petroleum based and melts first and then burns very easily.
- Avoid red colors - please note that the drinking of fluids or eating of iced desserts with red dyes, including but not limited to Kool Aid, Popsicle, cherry vodka, and soda pop, should not be done in any rooms with carpeting. These products will permanently stain. The carpeting will need to be replaced not just cleaned when stained with products with red dye.
- Keep inside the front door a mat to protect the carpet.
- When vacating the unit at the end of your tenancy engage a professional carpet cleaning firm to steam clean the carpets.

Care of hardwood floors

- The most important item in taking care of hardwood floors is not to drag items across the floor. Dragging furniture and other items will scratch the finish of the floor.
- Never leave water standing on hardwood floors. Remember that the pot that a potted plant is in will give off water. Never leave a potted plant sitting on hardwood floors it will make a black ring.
- Most hardwood floors have a polyurethane finish and thus do not need waxing but they do need to be buffed from time to time. If the floor is dull it is OK to wax it with a good hardwood floor wax. Remember to follow the instruction on the container
- Regular sweeping with a broom best cares for most hardwood floors. If it needs a more complete cleaning use a damp mop with clean water. DO NOT get the floor wet with water.

Care of vinyl flooring

- Most vinyl floors are best cared for with regular broom sweeping and an occasional mopping with water and a mild soap.
- Remember that vinyl floors can tear. AVOID dragging items across the floor.
- Also avoid dropping sharp items on the floor as they can puncture the surface and allow dirt to get into the finish
- Avoid tracking in of dirt or grit as these can scratch the floor.

Kitchen

- The cleaning of the stove is an item that tenants often neglect. Especially if you cook a lot on top of the stove and most especially if you fry a lot the top of the stove should be wiped clean after every use. The pans below the burners are often neglected, as the grill is often hot right after use. Remember to clean these after the grills cool. On gas stoves build up and spills will end up clogging the gas jets themselves. This will eventually keep the stove from lighting.

PAGE FOUR

The outside surface of the stove is an enamel finish. Scrapers, knives, or metal scratch pads will damage this surface. Not allowing foods to build up and bake on is the best way to avoid the need for such tools.

Remember that whenever you use the broiler or the oven they need to be cleaned out.

- The refrigerator generally takes care of itself. Some units do not have frost-free refrigerators. These will require periodic defrosting. This is especially true in the humid months of the summer time. If you do not defrost once every ten days during these months you may have a large amount of frost building up. The more frost the longer it will take to defrost. You may start worrying about having your food out too long and think to chip at the ice. BE WARNED you may when chipping puncture a coolant line thereby ruining the refrigerator. By routinely defrosting you will avoid frost build-up. Another cause of frost buildup is standing in front of the refrigerator with the door open thinking about what you want to take out. When the door stands open frost starts to build up.

Remember to wipe down the refrigerator once a week or more often. A particularly neglected area is the top of the refrigerator. The handle and the edge of the door are other areas that get dirty quickly.

- The counter tops are made of a thin material called laminate. This is a surface that is easily cleaned with a damp rag and soap and water. NEVER cut items directly on the counter top. The knife will cut into the top. Never set hot pans or other items on the top as these will burn and mark the top. Once cut or marked the top cannot be repaired and must be replaced.
- Remember that insects are attracted to food. A kitchen where dirty dishes are left out, where crumbs are present on the counters or the floors, where open containers of food are out, and where garbage cans are left unemptied will attract roaches, other insects, and mice.
- We also recommend against the practice of keeping out a container where reused lard and renderings are kept. When left at room temperature this stuff can go bad causing food poisoning. It also can attract insects.

Bathroom

- The sinks and counter tops in the bathrooms, and the tub/shower unit are easily scratched with steel wool type cleaning pads and with abrasive cleaners such as Ajax. We recommend using Gel-Gloss cleaner (note this product is carried by Menards Home Improvement Center) or other similar product.
- We discourage smoking inside of our properties. If you do smoke please always use an ashtray. It is not uncommon for a careless smoker to lay a cigarette down on the edge of a counter top and leave a burn mark or nicotine mark in the surface. Such marks are permanent.
- Toilets should be cleaned with a cleaner specifically made for the purpose. There are many brands on the market. Do not forget to clean the outside of the toilet, the underside of the seat and behind the seat. This is especially true if there are males in the household.
- We generally recommend that the bathrooms, counter top, sink, tub/shower, toilet, mirror be routinely cleaned every two weeks.

Heating

- Changing of furnace filters is our responsibility. At no time should the tenant remove any access panels from the furnace or the hot water heater. If the furnace's or hot water heater's pilot light goes out the tenant is strictly forbidden from attempting to relight it. You should immediately report any problems to us.
- Generally we recommend that you find a temperature setting that is the lowest that you can stand it and leave the thermostat set at the temperature when you are active. We have had tenants complain about a unit being cold and when we have visited found that the outside temperature is very cold, the tenants are in shorts and T-shirts and cannot understand why they are cold.
- A few helpful hints – The air heated by your furnace is very dry. Dry air feels colder than air with more moisture in it. That is why hot humid summer days feel worse than days when the humidity is less. Turning up the heat will raise the temperature in your unit. However it will also dry out the air more and run your power bill up. Always check that during heating season you have put down the storm windows in addition to the inside windows. Often wearing warmer clothing such as sweaters will make you feel much warmer than turning up the heat. It will also help keep your power bill lower. Most of our units have ceiling fans. Running them on low and having them blow upward will help keep the air from becoming layered.
- We also recommend that you add an extra blanket to your bed at night and turn the heat down 5 degrees before going to bed. This will help keep your power bill down. NEVER turn the heat lower than 50 degrees however.

Yard Care

We are very proud of this neighborhood. It is important to us that all of our properties look very good. As the tenant, how you keep the outside of the property is very important to us. We expect that the yard and the driveway look as good as any yard in any neighborhood in town. This is your responsibility.

- You are responsible for keeping your yard picked up and free of litter. This means both the rear and the front yard and the parkway. The parkway is that area of grass between the curb and the sidewalk. We recommend that you inspect these areas daily and make it a habit to pick up any litter you find first thing.
- Splash blocks and downspouts under your gutters are important to direct rainwater away from the foundation. It is important that you do not move or remove them. If you do please put them back into place immediately.
- IT IS IMPORTANT that you keep your yard neat and clean. Please keep it free of litter, toys, or other items at all times. If you do have items in your yard keep them well-organized and neat in appearance. Remember your yard is not a storage area. We are very serious about the clause in the lease that bans items from the front yard that are not lawn furniture or cooking grills.

Important Miscellaneous Items

- A word about grills – they can produce a large amount of heat. If setup too close to the property they can cause damage and even fire. Be very careful about how you use an outdoor grill and if you are using charcoal how you dispose of the used coals.
- You are responsible for replacement of all burnt out light bulbs (except those exterior lights that are on timers).

PAGE SIX

- A federal law has been passed that reduced the amount of water a toilet can flush. As long as only human waste and required toilet paper goes in the toilet the chance for clogging is slim. We have had to remove from clogged toilets paper towels, cigarettes, house plants, excessive toilet paper, waste paper, feminine hygiene products, rags, pens, pencils, and bobbie pins. All of these have caused toilets to overflow and in some cases damage to other surfaces – floors, ceilings, walls. If other drains are working in the house but the toilet is clogged this is a good sign that something has been flushed that is prohibited.
- No flammable liquid shall be stored inside the house at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, gasoline, solvents, varnishes, motor oil, charcoal lighter and oil base paints. Additionally, no batteries larger than a nine volt may be stored in or around the property. Generally excluded are any items that are generally known to have the potential for explosion. This shall include fireworks, which are prohibited by state statute. The keeping of any of the items specifically listed in this clause shall be considered good cause for immediate eviction.
- No paints or stains shall be stored inside the house at any time even if they are nonflammable.
- We provide garbage hauling at most of our units. At all units we require that excess debris and garbage not be allowed to build up. At the units where we provide garbage hauling the service is for one 90-gallon rolling tote can per week. If there is excess garbage beyond what can be put into this tote the hauler may charge us for it. If we are charged excess garbage fees we will charge you for them.
- The restriction on whom and how many can stay at the house is important. Every house or apartment is designed to hold only a certain number of people. More than this number both creates crowding and unhealthy living conditions and causes excessive wear and damage to the house. Additionally a landlord has an obligation to both his tenant and to the neighborhood to maintain control over who lives in his property. The reason that a written application is used with this lease is to screen out individuals who have a history of not taking good care of the property that they are renting or who are not good neighbors. Listing of any individual's name on the lease, who is not the tenant, does not in any manner convey control or tenants rights to them. The only individual or individuals who are granted by the lease control over the property or tenant rights regarding this property are those individuals who have signed the lease.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR UNIT OR THIS HANDBOOK PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO TELEPHONE 352 – 3498.