

Renter's Checklist

Before You Sign the Lease

A lease is a written contract between you and a property owner. It gives you the right to live in a home or apartment for a set period of time.

You should never rent a place without a written lease agreement. A written agreement explains your responsibilities. It also explains your landlord's responsibilities.

Before you sign the lease, look at the place that you want to rent to make sure that it is safe, clean, and livable.

When you visit a place, try to make the visit with the landlord or property manager. You might have questions that they can answer as you look at the property.

Renter's Inspection Form

The checklist below will help you make notes as you look at the place that you want to rent. Take this checklist with you so you have a record of your inspection.

Some of the rooms or areas in the checklist might not be included in the place that you are looking at. The checklist is here to give you a good idea of what to pay attention to when you look at a place that you want to rent.

If you are looking at more than one place, print a new checklist for each place. At the top, make a note of the place that you are inspecting. Write down the address and make a note of the unit size. The unit size can be the number of bedrooms and bathrooms that the property has.

You should also include the date of your inspection in case you need to follow up with the landlord about any repairs or to let the landlord know that there are damages.

The landlord does not have to make any repairs to the place. If you do not sign a lease, you do not have to move in to the property. Keep looking at other places and keep the checklist with you, so you know what to look at during your inspection.

Condition of the Property

The rating can range from poor, fair, good, excellent, not applicable, repairs needed, or need to be cleaned.

The column for notes is where you can write anything that you noticed during your visit. You should write down any damages that you see. For example, if there are scratches on the living room walls, write that down. If you see mold or water stains on the ceilings in the bathroom, write that down.

If you see damages, you should take pictures if you can. The pictures should be kept with your renter's inspection form, so you can ask the landlord or property manager if these will be repaired.

Even if the landlord makes a verbal promise to repair something, that agreement cannot be enforced. The landlord does not have a duty to fix anything unless he agrees in writing. It is important to inspect a place before you sign a lease agreement.

You can ask the landlord to make repairs. If the landlord agrees to make repairs, get that agreement in writing or have it included in the written lease agreement before you sign the lease or move in.

Remember that in Arkansas, you cannot withhold rent from the landlord for any reason. If you withhold rent, you will be evicted and the landlord may attempt to keep your belongings.

The ALSP Law Series is produced by the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership, a collaboration of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc. These nonprofit organizations provide free legal services to eligible Arkansans who meet income, asset, and other guidelines. Legal services may include advice and counsel, brief services, or full representation depending on the situation. Additional information can be found at: www.arlegalservices.org. To apply for services, call 1-800-9LAW AID.

*The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. **Always do what the court tells you to do.***

www.arlegalservices.org

Renter's Inspection Form

Street Address:		
Apartment Number:	Unit Size:	Inspection Date:

ROOM/AREA	RATING	NOTES	COST TO CORRECT
LIVING ROOM			
Floors & Floor Covering			
Drapes & Window Coverings			
Walls & Ceilings			
Light Fixtures			
Windows, Screens & Doors			
Front Door & Locks			
Fireplace			
Electrical Outlets & Switches			
Other			
Other			
KITCHEN			
Floors & Floor Covering			
Walls & Ceilings			
Light Fixtures			
Cabinets/Drawers/Handles/Shelves			
Counters			
Stove/Oven			
Refrigerator (exterior)			
Refrigerator (interior)			
Stove			
Oven			
Dishwasher			
Garbage Disposal			
Dishwasher			
Sink & Plumbing			
Microwave			
Windows, Screens & Doors			

Electrical outlets & Switches			
Fire Extinguisher			
Other			
Other			
DINING ROOM			
Floors & Floor Covering			
Walls & Ceilings			
Light Fixtures			
Windows, Screens & Doors			
Other			
BATHROOM(S)			
Floors & Floor Coverings			
Walls & Ceilings			
Windows, Screens & Doors			
Light Fixtures			
Bathtub/Shower			
Sink & Counters			
Cabinets			
BEDROOM(S)			
Floors & Floor Covering			
Windows, Screens & Doors			
Walls & Ceilings			
Light Fixtures			
Closets			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			
OTHER AREAS			
Heating System			
Air Conditioning			
Lawn/Garden			
Stairs & Hallway			

Patio, Terrace, Deck, etc.			
Basement			
Attic			
Parking Area			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			

Furnished Property

ROOM/AREA	RATING	NOTES	COST TO CORRECT
LIVING ROOM			
Coffee Table			
End Tables			
Lamps			
Chairs			
Sofa			
Other			
Other			
KITCHEN			
Broiler Pan			
Ice Trays			
Refrigerator (exterior)			
Refrigerator (interior)			
Other			
Other			
DINING AREA			
Chairs			
Stools			
Table			

Other			
Other			
BATHROOM(S)			
Mirrors			
Shower Curtain			
Hamper			
Other			
Other			
BEDROOM(S)			
Beds (single)			
Beds (double)			
Chairs			
Chests			
Dressing Tables			
Lamps			
Mirrors			
Night Tables			
Other			
Other			
OTHER AREAS			
Bookcases			
Desks			
Pictures			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			