



# Tenant Handbook

*Relax Realty Group Property Management Team*



**We are happy you will be renting from Relax Realty Group. We make sure all of our processes are systemized and organized so you know what you can expect from us as a management company. We absolutely want to make sure that your home is always safe and habitable. Please let us know of any maintenance issues immediately (especially if it is water-related) to prevent any secondary issues that may result. If the issue is cosmetic in nature or a nonessential luxury item, the owner will have to give his or her approval to spend the money to make the repair.**

**We depend on word of mouth to continue to grow our business so if you are happy with our services, please let any friends or family members know that they should contact us if they are looking for a rental (if they are responsible and neat only please...lol).**

**The following pages will let you know the Policies and Procedures that Relax Realty Group follows in almost any situation that has occurred over our 15 years experience. We always have those rare occasions that aren't in the book yet. Please call us directly with those issues or questions. We have to walk a fine line to make sure you are comfortable and safe in your home, while keeping any costs low for maintenance issues for the homeowner. Most of our clients are working with tight margins and so multiple people might have to evaluate a tricky situation. Please be patient with us and we will always be kind and professional to you.**

***You Relax, Because We Got It.***

**We are all licensed Realtors, so if you or any friends/family members need a Realtor they can trust to purchase a home, please call us. The SELLER always pays the commissions so you will have free representation to walk you though the complex process of home buying. We have lenders that give free appraisals and other service providers that will help you through the process. Our pest control guy will give you a free termite inspection. We would love to have you as our tenant forever, but home ownership is the key to financial freedom down the road.**

**We love our business and look forward to showing that you made the right choice to rent from us!**

**Sincerely,**

**The Relax Realty Team**

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## MAINTENANCE

### *Emergency Policy*

Although most maintenance requests are of a non-emergency nature and are taken care of during business hours, you may eventually encounter an emergency situation in your unit during non-business hours. If this occurs, please leave a message on our maintenance line 941-201-1100.

Please give your name, address and unit number, telephone number where our maintenance person can contact you directly, and then the nature of your situation. A member of our office staff will return your call and maintenance will be dispatched if necessary. Your message gets texted to 4 people so don't worry, you will be contacted.

It should be noted that emergencies are very specifically defined. The following situations warrant an emergency:

1. No heat.
2. No water / flowing water / burst pipe. (Please make sure you know where your main shut off is for the water so you can stop the house from flooding and any damage to your belongings)
3. No electricity after the circuit breaker has been thrown or fuse has been replaced. Many times it is an FPL issue so call them to make sure the power in your neighborhood is not out.
4. Exposed live wires.
5. Burglary / break-in for which the police have been called, or which has rendered your apartment to be insecure.
6. Fire, which required assistance from the fire department, or has caused your apartment to be insecure.

Please note that lack of air conditioning and lockouts are not considered emergencies. We will expedite your AC work order as a high priority but it will not be at night or on the weekend. If you are locked out during business hours, you can come to the office and get a key if an extra one is in the office. Please call first to make sure it is here and there is someone in the office to give it to you. It is not possible for someone from our office to let you in.

If you are locked out on a weekend or holiday, you must contact a locksmith in order to gain access to your home. (We recommend Darrell Ervans 941-650-7832). You are responsible for direct payment to the locksmith. We suggest you hide a key somewhere on your property-lock outs are common. If any property (window, door, lock, etc.) is damaged as a result of your attempt to regain access to your apartment, it will be repaired at your expense.

### ***Non-Emergency Maintenance***

The owner's want to maintain your property. Please report any broken items promptly so that we can make the repairs. Failure to report water leaks may cause many issues including mold and mildew. You will be responsible and it will not be considered normal wear and tear if you fail to report it. You can place a maintenance request by calling the line (941) 201-1100 or on your portal. If entering on the portal, submit a brief description of the issue and a photo. In order to submit, you must provide three times that you're available to be home for the repair.

This is what you should expect:

- You will be assigned a vendor within 6 business hours and that vendor's information will be emailed to you.
- You should be called by the vendor to set an appointment to fix the issue within 24 hours. If you haven't been contacted, please call or enter your request again using the maintenance line or portal. In some instances, something has gone wrong (for example, we don't have a correct number or human error occurred somewhere). We want to provide you with great customer service and maintenance is high on the priority list to accomplish that goal.
- You will be sent a survey after the maintenance is completed. We want to know how we are doing. Please be honest. You are our eyes and ears out there. If the maintenance was not completed properly or looks horrible, please let us know. We are responsible for keeping the owner's home in good condition and this means proper maintenance.

### ***Accidental Tenant-Caused Maintenance***

We have maintenance vendors that are very reasonably priced. Even if you accidentally caused a maintenance issue, you can call it into our system. The maintenance will be paid by Relax Realty and put on your ledger. The owner is responsible for all normal wear-and-tear maintenance. If the repair is a result of tenant negligence or ignorance it is the tenant's responsibility to pay for that repair. Some examples of repairs you will be responsible for:

- Items found in the plumbing lines. Flushable wipes are not FLUSHABLE. If your hair sheds, put a trap in your drain to catch this. It will clog the drain.

- Electric is out- you need to check the breaker.
- Broken faucets- our repair technician can tell if negligence is involved and will note it while there.
- Broken blinds - same as above.
- Jammed garbage disposals - get an Allen wrench to unjam your food items.
- Pest control- keep up with bugs. German cockroaches are human transferred.

Call your property manager, if you have any questions. You have responsibilities to take care of the home you are using. Kids and pets can make mistakes, but it is not the owner's responsibility to pay for any mistakes that the tenants or their families make.

## **EXTERMINATION**

We strive to keep our rentals free of pests. If you move into your home and see pest crawling around, please call your property manager immediately. We will provide professional extermination services up to one week after you move in. We cannot always see a problem when we are showing a vacant home. Unfortunately many pests don't start crawling until after dark.

You are not responsible for eliminating a problem that existed before you moved in. We can not control what is outside your home. In Florida you can expect to share your property with bugs, snakes, lizards and raccoons, just to name a few. If there is an alligator or another animal that is a nuisance, the Sarasota County Animal Control would be the entity to help you with that.

### ***What if I See Bug Inside My Home?***

You are responsible for any bug removal after you move into the home. It is Florida and many homes must have chemicals sprayed to keep them under control. You can use home remedy products or hire a professional pest control company. Boric acid is known to be a natural remedy for roaches.

To prevent roaches:

- Take out your garbage daily.
- Don't leave food or dirty dishes out.
- Dispose of paper bags and cardboard boxes.
- Clean a cat litter box daily.
- Pick up and dispose of your dog's waste immediately.

To repel ants, sprinkle bay leaves in the back of your cabinets. The best pest control for ants is Terro. It is cheap and you can get it from Amazon.

### ***What if I have Rats?***

Most of the time, the owner is responsible for removing rats. Please place a maintenance call for these issues. Unfortunately they are an issue in Florida and it will take multiple steps to get them irradiated from your home.

There are some instances where tenants have caused the rat issue in which case you will be responsible for paying for the irradiation of them.

To prevent rats you are responsible for the following:

- Walk around the house for soffit issues or any other obvious holes that they can enter. Take a look around your house monthly.
- Keep the exterior of your home free of clutter and landscaping debris. Rats love to burrow in this.
- Keep lids on your trash cans and bag all trash. This will keep the raccoons and armadillos away as well.

### ***What Happens If I Have Termites?***

Owners are always responsible for termite removal. If you see black dust in your window sills or near base boards please call in a maintenance request for us to investigate for termites or carpenter ants.

Termites swarm June to August. You will have many in your house for 1-5 days swarming. They are harmless, but it is quite unpleasant.

What you can expect when your home has termites: Our profession pest control contractor will visit the home and determine how bad the situation is. Your home will most likely have to be tented. During the summer months the tenting will be scheduled 5-7 weeks out. While the tent is on your house you will not be able to stay at the home. You will have plenty of time to make arrangements to find other accommodations for the days the tent is on the home. You will not have to pay rent for the days the tenant is on the home.

Our pest control contractor will go through the preparations you will have to make before the tent goes on to keep your food items safe. The gas will not hurt any furniture, clothing or personal items. It is gone from the house within 8 hours after the tent is removed. Only food can be effected and there are bags that you can keep your perishables in to keep them from being poisoned.

## ***What Happens If I Have Bed Bugs?***

Bed bugs are more of a nuisance than termites. How can bed bugs get into my home? They can come from other infested areas or from used furniture. They can hitch a ride in luggage, purses, backpacks, or other items placed on soft or upholstered surfaces.

The first sign of a bed bug problem is obvious: the bed. After bed bugs feed on humans, they'll leave behind blood stains resembling small rust spots. These will usually be found near the corners and edges of the bed. The bugs come into the home through tenants and are not the owner's fault. Even though it is accidental it will cost you some money. We will help the first time.

## ***Prevent Bed Bugs***

1. DO NOT pick up any "great" furniture off the side of the road. This is the most common way we have seen bed bugs invade one of our rentals.
2. Avoid using moving blankets provided by a moving company, and use your own instead. The blankets may not be cleaned regularly and could be infested with bed bugs from another person's belongings.
3. To avoid unwittingly taking them home on your clothing or purchases, hang your items on the provided wall hooks rather than the cushioned furniture provided in dressing areas.
4. Travelers run the risk of bringing bed bugs home from any hotel room bedding, furniture, or carpeting.
5. Determine if your room has signs of an infestation. Look for tiny rust-colored spots on bed sheets, mattress tags and seams, and bed skirts.
6. Raise furniture and look for bed bugs. Hiding spots usually include underneath the mattress, bed frame and headboard. Typically, they come out at night to feed, but during the day they are most likely found within a 5 foot radius of the bed.
7. Examine your luggage on a luggage rack away from the bed and wall, since bed bugs can often hide behind headboards, artwork, picture frames and electrical outlet panels.
8. Assess your luggage carefully while repacking and when you return home. ALWAYS keep luggage off the bed and store it far away from your bedroom.
9. Laundering the clothes immediately is recommended with extra dryer time to ensure killing any that might have latched on.
10. Laundry mats: Shared laundry facilities are the perfect conduit for the transmission of bed bugs from one location to another. Instead of carrying your laundry into and from the facility in an open clothes basket, opt for plastic bags.

### ***If I Get Bed Bugs what will the Treatment Plan be?***

So, what should you do if you find bed bugs in your bed? Don't wait to contact us. The longer you wait, the worse the treatment. We have a professional pest control company we will use to eradicate them from your house. You will have to get rid of furniture and wash your clothes in a certain manner to get rid of them. If you need to make payments to us for the treatment, that can be arranged. You must follow the steps exactly as provided by the professional. If you don't follow the steps, they will return. If they are not taken care of with the first round of treatment, you will be asked to move so we can attack this properly without your belongings in the home.

### **PAYING YOUR RENT**

#### ***How do I make my Rent payments?***

Rent is due on the first of each month. Rent that is received after the fifth of the month will acquire a late fee. Checks that are returned by your bank for any reason are subject to a \$25.00 fee as well as a late charge. If these fees are left unpaid, they will be deducted from your security deposit. If two checks are returned, we will require that you pay your rent by certified check, cashier's check, or money order. We have a NO CASH POLICY in the office.

#### ***Four ways to pay rent:***

On the portal:

- FREE- Payments can be made by using your personal checking account.
- Payments can be made on the portal using a credit or debit card. This incurs fees from the service provider. The fee is typically \$30, however, fees increase depending on the amount you are charging. The fee will be disclosed before you complete the payment.
- CASH Payments - Get your laminated, barcoded card from Relax Realty Group. This allows you to go to CVS or 7-11 and pay your rent there in cash. CVS and 7-11 will charge you \$3.95 for this service.

At the office:

- Rent payments may be mailed to our office or you may bring them to our office and place them in the steel mailbox out front (available 24 hours a day) at 1945 17th Street, Sarasota, FL 34234. There is a \$15.00 manual processing fee for this payment method. Make sure your address is on the money order and NO CASH.

### ***What happens if I don't pay rent?***

We have policies that must be followed, based on our contract with all owners. One of the important contractual obligations is obviously collecting rents, so our policy is set in stone on the collection process. We must follow these or our company will be paying your rents and that is not an option. Please make sure you communicate whenever you are having issues with rent. There are solutions to this problem.

Day 6 of the month (or next business day)- We will post a notice on ALL tenant's doors that have a balance due. This is the *Three Day Notice* to pay rent or move. If you have not communicated by this date to let us know what is going on, make sure you call your property manager to let her know what day you will be paying. Even if you have communicated with your property manager, we have to post this notice to meet our contractual obligations with the owner. Please don't take it as a personal attack. We do not want to evict you.

If you will not have your rent in by the 15th of the month, we can work with you and wait until you are going to receive your funds. Life happens to everyone at some point and we understand that it may be happening to you this month. In order to hold off on an eviction after the 15th of the month, we must have an Agreement to Vacate signed.

This is in the management contract so we must fulfill our promises to the owner of your home. You will sign this form that states you agree to vacate if you fail to come up with the rents due by the date you state. Once the rent is paid, the document clearly states the lease is in full effect. We would much rather have this form signed than file an eviction or have you move unnecessarily.

An eviction on your record will make it very difficult to find a home in the future. It is a tight marketplace in Sarasota/Manatee and an eviction is a simple way to deny bad tenants. If a tenant has an eviction on his or her record, we will not consider that applicant. That is the last resort solution to a nonpayment issue in our minds.

We can refer you to organization that will help you. If you changed jobs, had medical issues, or some other life speed bump, there are charitable organizations that will pay one month's rent to prevent homelessness. We have a great community-be part of it!

## **MOVING**

### ***How do I give Notice?***

Your initial lease is a year commitment. You may be offered renewals and some tenants stay month-to-month following their initial tenancy. You must always give notice prior to leaving the home. Please do not just leave without communicating with your property manager. Your lease states how long the notice must be. Some lease require 45 days which has you vacating on the 15th of the month and others require 30 days notice leaving at the end of the month. You may not chose any day of the month to leave the house and end your obligation of the rents due. Make sure all notices are received on or before the 1st day of the month to vacate 30 or 45 days from your notice.

You can give your notice to us in 3 ways:

1. Use your portal to give notice. It will automatically notify the property manager.
2. Send an email to your property manager and make sure she replies. If she hasn't received in 24 hours, please resend the notice.
3. Send your notice USPS certified mail to our office. Please mail this 7 days prior to the first of the month to ensure we receive it by the first of the month.

### ***What happens to the Last Month's Rent payment?***

If you have Last Month's rent in escrow your notice to vacate will immediately allow us to take your last month's rent from the escrow account and post that to your ledger. If you have to give a 45-day notice to vacate, you will have to pay 1/2 a month's rent with your notice. Your security deposit can NEVER be used to pay your last month's rent. We will have to follow our rent collection obligations with the owner's management contract and post the 3-Day Notice to pay rent and file the eviction if you haven't paid your rents. Although we like to believe our tenants when they say they will leave a home in good shape, we must maintain protection for the owners and return your security deposit after you vacate.

### ***What is Expected of Me When I Vacate?***

After you give us notice we will email or mail you the move-out letter which includes a checklist. This list of items will make sure you leave the house in the condition that you received it and you can get your security deposit returned. You can also access this list on our website at [www.relaxrealtygroup.com/moveoutchecklist](http://www.relaxrealtygroup.com/moveoutchecklist).

### ***What About the Return of My Security Deposits/Pet Deposits?***

There is nothing we like more than returning security deposits to tenants that leave their house in good order. You are happy with the money and our owner is happy with a house that has had a great tenant. Relax Realty Group is responsible for holding your funds in an escrow account. We release the funds back to you or to the owner to cover any damages you may have done to the home inside or out. Relax Realty Group doesn't keep any of the funds for ourselves. All of the money in escrow is distributed back to you or to the owner within 30 days after you vacate the home.

When you leave the house, you and your property manager will make arrangements for you to get the keys to us. We will not do any walk throughs with you before you vacate. Please take pictures if you feel everything is perfect. Your property manager will come to your property within 48 hours of you vacating to take pictures of any damages. If the house needs repairs, we wait to get proposals from our maintenance crews to know how much it will cost to repair the damages. It can take the entire 30 days to get some repairs fixed and the costs tallied, so please know that it will be mailed by the 30 day window required by law. You are not the only tenant that has moved that month so the entire process can take these full 30 days in some hectic months.

We must send the check and notice within 30 days certified mail. Please make sure you provide us with your forwarding address in your portal so we can mail the check to you. If we don't have an address and can't call you, we will send it to the last address known. If you have put a forwarding address with the post office it will be mailed to you, but the forwarding part will delay the process. Security deposit checks will be made out to all persons listed on the lease. We cannot divide the check unless it is prearranged by all parties prior to vacating. If you don't leave a forwarding address we have to mail it to your address last known which will be the home you just vacated.

### ***Abandoned Property***

Anything you leave behind will be considered abandoned property. We will remove and donate the items or take them to the dump. The lease states we have this right so we will not be storing them. If you leave without letting us know, Florida law considered a property "abandoned" if no one has been there for 15 days. If you are going on vacation and do not pay rent, please communicate with us. We would hate to have your items removed because we mistakenly think you have left without a notice. We want to have an emergency contact for you that is up-to-date as well. If you have an emergency and have to be

hospitalized we can call this person. We typically call the local hospital and jail before assuming a property has been abandoned. This is one of the most challenging situations. If there is a household full of items, we will file the eviction to gain legal right of the property and then dispose of the personal items legally.

## **INSPECTIONS**

We have a program that will allow you to do a self inspection of your home. We started this during COVID as a safer way to perform our requirements with the management agreement. Most tenants work during the day and personal inspections are inconvenient, so the ability to self inspect helped solve that issue as well. Pet owners love this because life is not crazy for them with the addition of a stranger into their home.

You will receive an email from your property manager with an invitation to perform your inspection through RentCheck. This takes approximately 30 minutes to snap the pictures around the home and enter any blemishes or repairs that are needed. We can send you a lease renewal after your home is inspected. If it is not completed thoroughly enough we will have to make a personal inspection.

If you are unable to perform the inspection, you must give the property manager access to your home. If you are not home during the time scheduled, she will use our key to enter the home to perform this task. If the locks have been changed we will order a locksmith to change them and you will be charged for the lock change. Bottom line, if you will not perform the inspection and will not allow legal access to Relax Realty Group's property management team, your lease will not be renewed and you will receive a notice of lease termination on the day the lease expires. Although you are living at the home, it is someone else's property and we have to be able to do our job to make sure it is being cared for properly. We are not trying to invade your privacy at any time. We will schedule our inspection one week in advance and it will be during business hours.

## **LEASE RENEWAL**

When you are 60 days from the end of your lease, you will receive a notice to renew your lease. These are quite simple. Right after the inspection, you will receive the offer to renew your lease with any additional addendums we have added to the lease over that year. This will all be done electronically. If you are unable to receive this electronically, you can come to the office to sign your renewal or we can mail one to your house to return to us.

The lease renewal will only change the term and price of your lease. All other terms and conditions of your original lease remain the same. If no renewal is offered or you chose not to sign the renewal offer, the lease in place is still in effect. It automatically transfers to a month-to-month lease with the required 30 or 45-day notice that is required. You can't just leave your home without notice. You are responsible for the next 30 days of rent or until a new tenant moves into the home, whichever is less.

## **BREAKING YOUR LEASE**

Life happens to everyone, so we are understanding of circumstances. Our policy for breaking the lease is quite simple. The owner doesn't get to profit from you leaving early, however, they don't lose the money because life is hitting you hard right now. The sooner you inform your property manager of your circumstances, the longer the property manager has to place a tenant in your home and the less damages will be imposed for breaking the lease. We rent homes quickly and can show your home while you are still living there to have just days of vacancy and cost to you.

You will be charged to get the home in rent-ready condition so the more you do to accomplish this goal the less cost to you as well. The owner charges 1/2 month's rent for procuring a new tenant and performing all the leasing requirements. This will be your responsibility to pay out of your security deposit. Don't be afraid to communicate to your property manager. She will not be mad, but will go into action for you to prevent high cost to you. We are very understanding in times of turmoil.

## **SUBLEASING/ROOMMATES**

Your lease is a signed legal document that holds all the tenants listed on the lease responsible for all rent monies, from the beginning to the end of your lease term. If one tenant moves, please have them come to the office and sign the necessary paperwork. This will allow that tenant to no longer be responsible for the rents and ALL Escrowed funds stay with the home with the remaining tenants. If you leave the home without doing this and your roommates stop paying rents, we will have to include you with the eviction filing. You will have this on your record even though you are not at this house any longer.

You cannot ADD tenants after the lease is signed. If you want to add a roommate they will have to pass the application process to be a legal occupant in the home. You want to have a good roommate experience so let this application process be a mandatory excuse you use to see if you are getting a responsible roommate. Believe us, we have seen many bad roommate situations after ignoring this requirement. Once

you have moved a roommate in that has not passed the application process you are in direct violation of the lease and ALL residents will be asked to move as a result. We will not help you remove the bad apple you moved in.

‘You may not ever sublet any part of the home, use the dwelling in any vacation rental services like Airbnb, or substitute another tenant into the home. If you have odd situations call your property manager to make sure this is not violating the lease and might result in legally removing everyone from the home. The longest a “guest” may stay is clearly printed on the first page of your lease.

## **DECORATIONS AND ALTERATIONS**

The tenant is not allowed to paint or alter the apartment without the landlord’s consent. No alterations to plumbing or electrical fixtures are permitted. If you are given consent to paint you will be required to put additional security deposit into escrow to cover the cost of painting the home back to our rental color before you leave. Our current rental color is Rhinestone from Sherwin Williams. If your home is a different color, we can ask the owner if you can switch to this color. If approved, you will not be charged after you vacate.

Locks may not be changed unless we agree in writing, in which case you must provide us with a key. You can hang pictures. Pictures should be hung with hanger sets that have thin nails. Please do not use the glue-on variety because they may damage the surface of the wall when they are removed. You can use small anchors when needed. You do not have to patch the small holes when you leave, just remove your nails.

You may not remove any landscaping or trees without permission. If you want to make improvements to the exterior in any way, you must request in writing what you want to do specifically so we can ask the owner.

If you break a window, or damage a door or lock while attempting to gain entry into your apartment, you will be charged for any repairs necessary. If you lose your keys, and a lock change is necessary for your own or for building security, you will be charged \$85.00 per lock.

## **PETS**

We are one of the few Property Management Companies that advocate for pet owners. We suggest that owners of single family homes allow furry family members and have had great results with responsible pet owners. Please do not abuse this privilege. Be considerate of your neighbors. Clean up after your pet, outside your home as well as inside. If your dog barks incessantly when you are not at home, we may require you to restrict your dog to certain areas of your home where your neighbors will be less aggravated by the dog's barking. If you have a cat, please clean the litter box frequently.

Dog owners: You have to supply us with dog bite insurance policy when you move into the home. Please renew this every year to be in compliance with your pet addendum.

If you are considering getting a pet after you move into the home you must call your property manager to get the owner's permission prior to getting an animal. You will not be able to get any fighting breeds for it will create insurance issues with the homeowner. You will have to pay a pet deposit, sign a pet addendum and secure dog bite insurance.

No breeding of any animal is allowed in any of our rental homes.

No pets are allowed in any duplex or multi-family complex. We have found we are managing dog waste and barking as frequently as tenants so we just eliminated this privilege in these living situations.

## **PARKING**

All cars on your property MUST have legal tags and be drivable. No cars can be parked on the grass. All cars must be on the driveway or in the garage. If you have any cars that are in the yard, don't have tags or are broken, you will receive a lease violation notice. You have 7 days to rectify this situation with the first violation notice. The next time it happens you will have 7 days to leave the house. We are obligated to the owner in our management agreement to make sure the home looks good and is well maintained. Nothing makes a house look worse than a derelict car in front. We take this very seriously and will enforce this clause in the lease to the full effect.

If you live in a multi-family building you have to let us know what kind of car you have. If you fail to keep this updated and your car is towed for any reason, do not call us. We have no authority over the tow truck drivers. Call the number on the signs in your parking lot. We receive no money from the towing

companies, and can't judge the legitimacy of your complaint. Do not deduct the towing fee from your rent, or your rents will be considered late. When you vacate your apartment, you must return your parking sticker, even if it is in shreds. If you don't, we will deduct \$50.00 from your security deposit.

Do not park cars on the drain field or tank. The drain field usually has the healthiest grass in the yard. It will destroy the drain field which is a \$7,000 repair and will be your responsibility. Make sure guests do not park on your yard.

## **GARBAGE/RECYCLING**

Sarasota and Manatee counties each have requirements for the trash and recycling. It is the tenant's responsibility to know your requirements. Check to make sure if you are in the city because they have other requirements to be aware of. Every jurisdiction requires you take out your trash weekly to prevent pets.

### ***Do you supply trash cans?***

Certain jurisdictions supply trash cans and recycling cans or receptacles. You have to take care of these and leave them when you vacate or the cost to replace these will be taken from the security deposit. You must maintain these properly by not overloading them and keeping the interiors clean by using trash bags for all your waste.

If the city/county doesn't supply trash cans, you are responsible to purchase these. Sometimes they are left by prior tenants. You can continue to use any trash cans that are on the property, but if they are stolen, cracked, etc you will have to buy your own replacements. Make sure they have tight-fitting lids. If you have open trash cans on your property and a rat infestation occurs, you will be responsible for the cost to remove the rats.

## **SATELLITE DISHES/CABLE LINES**

***NO SATELLITE DISHES CAN BE INSTALLED ON ANY PART OF THE HOME.***

***NO HOLES CAN BE DRILLED FROM THE INSIDE TO THE OUTSIDE OF ANY EXTERIOR WALL. If you have an existing satellite dish on your home when you move in, please make sure this is noted on your move-in inspection or YOU will be charged for the removal.***

If we see a satellite dish on your home, you will receive a violation of the lease and the dish will have to be removed within 7 days. Our maintenance crew will have to make the repairs to the fascia at your cost. If installed on the roof, you will have to pay for a roofing contractor to make the repairs needed to fix the holes put into the roof. This can be very costly!

### ***Where can I Install a Satellite Dish and coaxial outlets?***

You can have the dish installed on a 4X4 post in the side or back of your property. You are responsible to remove this when you vacate or the removal and disposal will be taken from your security deposit. All lines must be professionally installed and wires fed through the attic into the walls at the same level as the electrical outlets with a cover plate.

## **PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE OF YOUR HOME**

The homeowner is responsible for keeping the systems of the house operational. You are using them and living in the home so how these systems are used makes a difference in the “normal wear and tear of them”. Living with these systems makes you responsible for the normal day-to-day care of them. Most of you know how to take care of a home, however, we have provided a list of items you need to monitor on a regular basis.

### ***What Are the Tenant Responsibilities?***

- Keep your home clean including all surfaces, around the AC vents on the ceiling, fans, blinds, and appliances.
- Provide Pest Control - any interior bugs (except swarming termites)
- Change AC Filter monthly
- Pour vinegar or bleach with water drain AC line
- Vacuum the back of the refrigerator coils (if exposed)
- Locate the fuse box and main water shut off valve for the house and make sure it is operational. This will be invaluable if you lose power or water is leaking into the house.
- Keep the yard like you found it, trim all bushes and keep landscaping off roof and soffit. Clean up debris around property.

Here are details to help maintain the many systems in your home:

## ***Septic tanks***

If you have a septic tank at your property it is imperative that you only put water and one-ply toilet tissue down any drain. No garbage disposals can be installed on a kitchen sink if there is a septic tank. Do not pour grease down any drains. All cleaning products need to be septic-tank friendly. Remember, this is going directly into the ground so be very conscience of any chemicals going into our water. Dryer sheets may also clog the inlet baffle. Cat litter contains clay particles that add to the solid waste volume in your septic tank. Over time, the clay will clog pipes and ruin your septic tank. If the septic tank gets full of items you put down the drain, the pumping of the system will be the responsibility of the tenant which can cost up to \$425.

The tank and drain-field only hold so much water. The drain-field will also be competing with rains during our heavy raining months. Please don't run the dishwasher, washing machine, take a shower and then flush a toilet. You will be very unhappy because the waste water will start backing up. We suggest that you refrain from having water go into the drain-field during the downpour hours of summer afternoon rains. Run your dishwasher or washing machines in the morning.

Your tank will whisper to you prior to needing to be pumped. If you flush your toilet and you hear bubbles in the toilet bowl, that is an indicator that the tank is full. Once you hear this twice, place a maintenance call for a septic company to come to the house. It may take a day or two to have a truck come to the house, so don't wait to place a call. We don't want to have it back up into your house or have all the plumbing unusable for 24 hours while we are wait for the pump truck to come.

Do not park cars on the drain field or tank. The drain field usually has the healthiest grass in the yard. It will destroy the drain field which is a \$7,000 repair and will be your responsibility. Make sure guests do not park on your yard either.

Septic tanks are GREAT because you will have NO sewer charge on your water bill, but they need to have special care.

## ***Bathroom/Kitchen***

Keep all surfaces free of water. Check the cabinets under the sinks to make sure there aren't any leaks occurring. We suggest that you keep something plastic right under the sink's plumbing in case a leak

occurs to prevent damage to the cabinet. You can catch a slow leak by doing this. If any of the faucets leak, report that immediately. It can ruin the counters and cabinets.

### ***Shower/tub***

Moisture is naturally occurring in bathrooms during showers. Steam sits on surfaces. If this is not cleaned regularly, mildew will form and then this black substance stains. Buy some spray to keep the shower/tub clean and free of mildew.

Always use the shower curtain, making sure it is closed completely during a shower to prevent water spillage. When a shower spills onto the floor, it can damage the trim and floor.

If the caulking between the tile and the tub splits, please contact us to repair it before there is any major water damage. If your water pressure in the shower is low, first try cleaning the shower head by removing it and soaking it in white vinegar. Then try scraping out any mineral deposits in the jets. If this fails to correct the problem, please contact us. The best way to remove dirt from the anti-skid surface on the bottom of the bathtub is with Dow bathroom cleaner.

### ***Toilets***

Flushable wipes are NOT flushable! Please do not use toilet bowl cleaners that must be submerged in the tank, for they will harm the plumbing and cause the toilet to leak underneath. If your toilet is clogged, first try plunging it. NEVER put tampons, sanitary napkins, empty toilet paper rolls, grease, or any other objects that are not meant to be flushed down the toilet. If you do and a problem ensues, you will be charged.

If you hear running water from the toilet when you aren't using it, there is a leak in the system. If you question if there is a leak or not you can perform an easy leak test. Put a few drops of food coloring in the top tank when you leave for the day. If the color goes into the bowl there is a leak. This can make your water bill significantly higher. Make sure the shut off valve under the toilet works. You can shut that off while you are waiting for the maintenance crew to fix the flapper.

### *Sinks*

NEVER pour grease down the drain. Instead, pour it into a can, let it harden, and dispose of it in the garbage. We request that you do not use any type of chemical clog removers in your drain. It is helpful to pour bleach in drains once a month to keep drains free flowing.

### *Stove*

Do not allow kids to stand on oven doors. Use oven cleaners only on the inside of your oven, since they tarnish chrome and aluminum surfaces. If you cook and have items boil over often, the burner bowls will get ruined. You will be charged for these after you vacate. Keep them cleaned and shinny or buy new ones before you move. If burners have a lot of grease they will short out. It takes special care and materials to clean a flat top stove. You must maintain this to prevent staining. The grease and stains are not considered normal wear and tear.

### *Dishwashers*

We recommend using a name-brand dishwashing detergent, preferably liquid. Cheaper brands do not dissolve as effectively and tend to gum-up in the dishwasher. NEVER use laundry or other detergents in your dishwasher. Rinse your dishes completely of any food particles before loading to prevent clogs in the water line and motor. If the line is full of food, you will be responsible for this maintenance cost. Remember, it is a dishwasher, not a disposal.

### *Refrigerators*

Certain refrigerators need to be defrosted. You should try to do this every 2-3 months. DO NOT use an ice pick, knife, or any other sharp objects to chip ice from the surface of your freezer. This will cause damage to the refrigerator that you are liable for. To speed the defrosting process, place a pot of boiling water in the freezer. This will melt the ice enough to be easily removed by hand. Pull the refrigerator out and vacuum the coils once a quarter.

Handles, shelves and door pieces do not break unless they are overloaded or mistreated. You will be charged for missing door shelves and broken interior parts. It will be cheaper for you to order them online and have the part shipped to you. Just go onto the manufacturer's website and use the model number to order the broken pieces. We will charge you for our time to place the order and install the pieces.

### ***Electrical Outlets***

If your apartment has been remodeled since 1985, the bathroom has electrical outlets with reset buttons on them. If you lose power in that particular outlet, simply press the button and the power will be restored. If the power is not restored, check your circuit breakers and reset any that have flipped off. Do not overload one outlet with a full power strip; this is a fire hazard.

### ***Light Bulbs***

It is your responsibility to change your own light bulbs. All of the bulbs worked before you moved in unless noted in your move in inspection and you will be charged for any bulbs that need to be replaced after you leave. If you can't change the bulbs you can use our maintenance crews to do this for you at your cost. I know some lights are higher than you can reach, please use our handyman if you are not comfortable. They are very reasonable.

### ***Fireplaces***

For safety's sake, you can't use any fireplace in any of our rentals. There are not many fireplace-worthy days in Florida anyway. You can put the electric candles or real candles in scones inside your fireplace for the ambiance.

### ***Heat***

We don't have to use heat that often in Florida, but many Floridians are admittedly wimps and can't stand anything under 50 degrees. Before the first cold snap, check you heater to make sure it is operating. When you first turn the heater on in your home, there will be a burnt smell. This is common and it will subside after an hour. If you have a window AC, you will need portable space heaters. Please make sure you know where these are before the first heat snap. If they are not in your home, call your property manager. It is easy to purchase these before the first cold snap. Once the cold snap comes, they are all off the shelves for a couple weeks. We can have Amazon ship them, but it will still take a few days to receive.

## ***Air Conditioning***

When turning on central air conditioning, run just the fan for about a minute before turning on the air conditioning. If you have central AC, you will be receiving a filter in the mail to install monthly. These have expiration dates written on them. This is required and can extend the life of the system 2-3 years when this is properly done, so we take this seriously.

If we find a filter that hasn't been changed, the tenant will be fined \$50 for not complying the first time and the lease will be in default. The second time, the tenant can be evicted from the premises. We will charge you for cleaning the coils of the system if this is discovered after you vacate.

If you have window units, always leave the vent in the closed position when not in use. Rinse out the filter on your window unit monthly during periods of heavy use. Make sure the system is draining properly outside. If the box is tilted inside, the water will drain in the wall creating mold. If you see discoloration under the window unit, report this immediately so we can check for moisture.

### ***Why can't I buy my own filters for less money?***

In the beginning of 2019, we started the program for tenants to receive AC filters through the mail. From 2012-2018 we tried EVERYTHING else to get tenants to change the AC filters. We tried to have people save receipts, take pictures of them, and 90% of the time we were charging for a coil clean out of the security deposit. It is just too hard on the system to not change the filter monthly. The filter you will receive is not the best quality BUT it is fine if changed monthly. We can't make any exceptions and have too many homes we are responsible for to manage it any other way. We know the filter is "cheap" and less than \$20, but this service will ship filters monthly, taking the burden off the tenant and us and making sure the owner's system is maintained properly. With a 90% failure rate on our prior attempts, we had to implement a system that works.

## ***Security Systems***

It is very important for you to be security conscious. Make sure doors, gates, and back porch doors are closed and locked. Lock all locks to your apartment. If you live in a garden or first floor apartment, make sure all of your windows are locked. If someone enters your home, the owner is not responsible for any of your personal items. Renters insurance is suggested and discussed later on in the manual. If you want to

install any security systems it must be done professionally. Holes may NOT be drilled through the exterior walls of the home to the interior.

### ***Storms and Windows***

Storms are a common occurrence in Florida. Relax Realty Group is not going to secure your home for a hurricane. Renter's insurance is encouraged to cover your personal items. If you want to board your house up, we must contact the owner for permission to do so since this will require holes next to all the windows. If there are hurricane shutters on your home, please check to make sure these are operational in June before a storm is coming. If a big storm is coming, our maintenance crew is typically unavailable until after the storm. They are busy taking care of their own home and family. If a really BIG storm hits, we would love it if you would text us immediately following to let us know that everything is ok and undamaged at your home. Owners always ask about their homes/tenants and we like to report that all is well.

### ***Laundry Facilities***

It is important to check the water hook ups often to make sure they are not leaking. A small drip will create mold issues where you can't see this behind the machines. Touch the connections when you are doing laundry to make sure they are dry.

***FIRE HAZZARD*** *You must keep your lint filter inside your dryer clear and check the line coming from the dryer to the outside free of lint. This is a big fire hazard and can easily ignite.*

For your convenience, some of our larger complexes have laundry machines. For everyone's benefit, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not overload the washer because clothes may get tangled in the motor, or get wedged between the tub and body.
- Do not use nickels, slugs, bus tokens, or foreign coins. They will jam the machine causing it to be out of order for several days until it can be repaired.

### ***Pool***

Pools must be maintained properly or they can be severely damaged. If you are responsible for maintaining the pool, you must do this regularly and consistently. Because this is such a serious

responsibility if we find you are letting the pool turn green, we will mandate a pool service paid by you with only one offense. We don't have time to come to your back yard every month to keep checking on it, so you will pay for the pool service after only one time. It is not easy, especially in the summer months, so don't feel bad. You keep up the chemicals, vacuuming, cleaning the removable filter, emptying skimmer and reporting any mechanical issues promptly to us. If you have pool service weekly provided to you, you are still responsible for keeping the skim basket clear of leaves and debris. This will inhibit the proper filtration of the pool.

## **MOLD AND YOUR RENTAL**

Mold is a serious issue in homes and we take this complaint very seriously. To date we haven't had a home test positive for the dangerous black mold that is extremely toxic. This mold is very rare and takes certain conditions to grow, making it very uncommon.

Visible "Black mold" is typically mildew. Air conditioning produces mildew when it is very warm and mildew forms in bathrooms. These visible mildews can be cleaned with Tilex,

Some homes that use window ACs hold more humidity than ones with central air. bring the rainy season, the type of mold that is present outside will be higher in homes with this higher humidity. This is not deadly, but people with sensitivities might have an issue with these higher humidity levels. You can get a dehumidifier for your home if you find the humidity high. You can sometimes tell before moving into a house because it can smell musty.

During the summer months, please run your air conditioning at 80 degrees or lower at all times to prevent mold spores from growing.

If you see any water leaking anywhere, report it immediately. We want to fix the leak and change the drywall out before mold starts to become an issue.

If you see white mold spores forming on your personal items, please let us know. This is a sign there may be a leak somewhere hidden or the humidity in your home is too high. Also if your water bill is much higher than normal report this immediately. It is usually a toilet leaking but it can also indicate that there is a hidden leak.

Unfortunately, for liability reasons, if you feel that there is mold and it is affecting your health, we will terminate your lease and make it possible for you to live in a healthy environment in another home. It can take time to assess and rectify the issue and we don't want your health to deteriorate while you are living with the mold. Some molds are not "harmful" to most but might be to you and we can't let you live with them. Your health is more important than anything. You might not want to make that move but we want to make sure you are safe and not living in a toxic environment.

## **USE OF HOME AND COURTESY TO NEIGHBORS**

We have several clauses in the lease and addendum that will require you to live in your home in a peaceful manner. If you are looking to have a party pad, use drugs, run any illegal business or just create any disturbances in the neighborhood you have not chosen the right landlord. We take our responsibility seriously to make sure your neighbors are safe. We believe every neighborhood has the right to live in an area where others follow the County ordinance regulations on noise from 10pm to 7am.

We will post a Disturbance Notice on your door if there are any complaints and the person complaining has proof of the disturbance. If there is a second disturbance reported with proof, we will file for eviction. If you receive the first notice and you are not going to change your behavior we suggest you start looking for another rental. You do not want an eviction on your record. It will be difficult to get another home if you have this on your civil record.

Your Drug Crime Free Addendum on your lease allows us to immediately file for eviction if there is any drug activity at your home. Again, we take our job very seriously and will not tolerate any use or sales of illegal drugs. You are responsible for all guests that are on your property and the excuse "it wasn't mine" will not be acceptable. If you have been caught with illegal drugs, you should request and sign an Agreement to Vacate form to avoid eviction. Because of the nature of crimes involving drugs, we may not even contact you before filing for the eviction due to the risk of unpredictable behavior at the property. If law enforcement has charged someone at the house with drug possession or distribution, you should contact us to avoid eviction proceeding from being initiated.

Your home is zoned residential. You can't run any business out of your home. If you use your computer for work in your house, that is acceptable for County zones, however, you can't have any customers coming to your home for business purposes. You may not have a daycare, pet watching services, or any other home-based business under any circumstances.

## **RENTER'S INSURANCE**

You are responsible for your stuff. If there is a fire, flood or theft that occurs at your home, the owner's insurance policy (if there is one) will cover the home and any damages to the property. It will not cover your personal items that are damaged, even if the flood wasn't your fault. We strongly suggest you call the company from which you get your car insurance and inquire about/obtain a rental insurance policy. Honestly, insurance is not our business, but this is the best investment you can make. These policies are usually less than \$200/year and will save you if a big storm hits. You will not have to wait for adjustors to evaluate your items. From what we understand, if there is a storm and your house is leveled and your items are not salvageable you will receive a check from the company for the amount of your policy. You and your family will be able to have money for a hotel and to replace your belongings after this terrible occurrence. Some might even cover the housing of your family after the storm. I know one tenant had his car broken into at Siesta Key Beach and his rental insurance policy covered the items that were stolen from his car. Our Broker had her bike stolen on campus while at college and the insurance company replaced the bicycle. Get all the details from the agent to see what policies and coverages are available.

## **SMOKING**

There is NO SMOKING in or around any of our rentals. You were asked if you smoke on your application and if you answered "YES" it would result in an immediate denial of the application. Your lease included a Nonsmoking Addendum and you will be given an immediate 7-day notice to vacate if you smoke anywhere on your property. You cannot allow guests to smoke either. We hear that "We only smoke outside" however the smoke gets on your clothing. You then walk into your home with this clothing that has smoke on it and your house smells like smoke. If you smoke you cannot smell this, but it will damage the property. It takes a lot of money to remove the smell of smoke from the walls, AC ducts, etc. We have a zero tolerance level for this!