

RENTER'S TROUBLESHOOTING Quick Guide

The information provided in this guide is not to be construed as legal advice. Readers should consult a lawyer if they have any questions about information contained here and should not rely on information contained in this flyer as a substitute for legal advice. The publisher of this flyer does not endorse any of the services described in the flyer.

PREVENT PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN

- Visit the Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services at Goldstein Student Center, Suite 206 to read students' comments about local landlords, as well as responses from the landlords. (Landlord Information Sharing Program)
- Read your lease before you sign it. Be sure you understand all the terms you are agreeing to. If you don't understand something, ask! If you need help understanding your lease or would like to have it reviewed for free, call Student Legal Services before you sign it. Once you sign a lease, it can be difficult and even impossible to get out of it. Even if your landlord fails to live up to his or her responsibilities under the lease, you may not be released from your obligations.
- Keep a rental file with all rental materials, including: lease, utility bills, landlord correspondence, and rent receipts.
- Protect your security deposit. Before you move anything into your apartment, take pictures or videotape the condition of your apartment. Complete a detailed checklist of all present damages.
- Be a good neighbor. Introduce yourself to your neighbors when you move in.

HEAT AND UTILITIES

If your landlord controls the heat:

- Syracuse Property Code (§27-54) requires that all occupied buildings be kept at a temperature of at least 68°F from September 15 to May 31 when the outdoor temperature falls below 55°F.
- If you believe your apartment is not being kept at the required temperature, notify your landlord in writing. Be sure to keep a written copy of all correspondence with your landlord.
- If you feel your landlord is still not complying with this requirement, call the City of Syracuse Code Enforcement Office at 315.448.8695.

If you control the heat:

- Ask your landlord for an estimate of heating costs. The landlord must provide this information to prospective tenants upon written request.
- Visit www.nationalgridus.com for tips on reducing energy expenses.

INSECTS AND RODENTS

- Call your landlord if you suspect you have insects or rodents.
- If your phone call does not produce results, put your request in writing and notify the City of Syracuse Code Enforcement Office at 315.448.8695.

LEASE DISPUTES AND GENERAL LANDLORD COMPLAINTS

If you have a disagreement with your landlord concerning either of your responsibilities, it is best to try to reach an agreement. After reaching an agreement with your landlord, follow up your discussion in writing. If a dispute still exists between you and your landlord, you may want to consult Student Legal Services. They can provide free legal consultation and advice about landlord-tenant issues. You can also file comments about your experiences with your landlord with the Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services through the Landlord Information Sharing Program. To obtain a Comment Form and instructions, contact 315.443.5489 or offcampus@syr.edu.

NOISE

- The City of Syracuse noise ordinance prohibits excessive or unnecessary noise that can be heard across property lines or between floors.

NUISANCE PARTY

- The City of Syracuse nuisance party ordinance states that no responsible person shall sponsor, conduct, host, invite, or permit a party in which irresponsible behavior occurs.

PARKING

- Cars cannot be parked on lawns, whether public or privately owned, sidewalks, or within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.
- Be aware of odd/even side parking. Cars parked on the wrong side of the street will be ticketed and possibly towed.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- If you need something in your apartment repaired, contact your landlord by telephone or e-mail. Keep track of all phone calls and copies of e-mail.
- If your landlord refuses to make necessary repairs or fails to make repairs in a reasonable amount of time, contact the City of Syracuse Code Enforcement Office at 315.448.8695.

SIDEWALKS AND SNOW REMOVAL

- Landlords may transfer the responsibility of shoveling snow to their tenants through the lease agreement. If you are unsure of whether you are responsible for snow removal around your apartment, check your lease or call your landlord.
- Snow and ice must be cleared from sidewalks that are parallel to public streets by 6 p.m. of the day following the accumulation.

TROUBLESHOOTING RESOURCE GUIDE

City of Syracuse

CITY LINE: 315.448.CITY (448.2489)

Call CITY LINE to report potholes, dangerous sidewalks, or damaged traffic lights or signs.

City of Syracuse Code Enforcement

315.448.8695

Enforces complaints against landlords for violations of the Syracuse Housing Code.

City of Syracuse Police Department

Non-emergency number: 315.422.5111

Emergency number: 911

Landlord Information Sharing Program

<http://occs.syr.edu>

offcampus@syr.edu

315.443.5489

This program allows SU and ESF students to file written comments about positive or negative experiences with their landlords.

New York State Attorney General's Office

315.448.4800 (ask for Consumer Affairs Department)

1.800.771.7755 (Consumer Helpline)

www.oag.state.ny.us (go to Consumer Frauds)

Handles tenant complaints about security deposits and general landlord/tenant issues.

Student Legal Services

www.studentlegal.net

email@studentlegal.net

720 University Avenue

315.443.4532

Free legal services for full-time students (law students not eligible).

Syracuse City Court—Small Claims

505 S. State Street, Room 130

315.671.2784

Informal court where you can sue for money only, up to \$5,000, without a lawyer. Filing fee (\$15-\$20).

Syracuse University

Office of Student Living on South Campus

Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience

Goldstein Student Center, Suite 206

401 Skytop Road

Syracuse, New York 13244

t: 315.443.5489

f: 315.443.2343

<http://housing.offcampus.syr.edu>