



Chippewa County Department of Public Health

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What All Renters Should Know

Chippewa County Department of Public Health gets many calls from renters complaining about anything from mold issues to problems with their landlords. First off, we do not dispense legal advice. There are however legitimate concerns that a property may present human health hazards that do result in the Environmental Health Coordinator coming out to the property to perform an investigation. Ultimately, a renter must be informed before they sign on to a long-term lease agreement. A good landlord will agree that the following information makes the relationship between the tenant and landlord a better experience for both parties involved.

When a renter looks at a property to rent, take this check list with you so you can take notes on what the property's strengths and weaknesses are.

STATE OF REPAIR

- ✓ Windows and screens in good repair?
- ✓ Water damage on ceilings/walls?
- ✓ Any evidence of mold on floors, walls, or ceilings? Look in the closets, cupboards, etc.
- ✓ Any faucets or visible pipes leaking?
- ✓ Does the toilet flush properly?
- ✓ Any evidence of rodents or other vermin?
- ✓ Check the operation of the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- ✓ Do the light switches and outlets operate?
- ✓ If you have a basement check for water seeping in from the foundation.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

- ✓ Do the doors have dead bolts?
- ✓ Do the patio doors have a secure lock or security bar?
- ✓ Do the windows open / close properly and lock?
- ✓ Do the hallways / entry ways have sufficient lighting?

Just as landlords will usually ask for personal references from a tenant, do not be afraid to ask the landlord to provide references. A good landlord will not hesitate to provide this.

Always read and understand your lease/rental agreement. Remember that this is a legal binding document, so before you sign your name, it is important to understand what you just signed. Never sign a lease or rental agreement for a property you have never looked at. Do not move into a property without first having signed a lease or rental agreement.

It is always advised to have renter's insurance. The landlord may carry insurance on the structure of the building, but it is not the landlord's responsibility to insure your personal items.

Chippewa County Department of Public Health is available to help you in case you do have a human health hazard, but by following the checklist referenced above, this should prevent you from experiencing an undesirable situation from happening at all.