

# Tenant's Handbook

Welcome to your new residence.

We would appreciate it if you would let us know your new phone number as soon as possible. Remember to also have all the utilities placed in your name (where applicable), effective the first day of your lease. Should your stove be gas, you will need to check with the City of Richmond Gas Department to establish that gas account.

The following information is designed to answer frequently asked questions, and to minimize confusion related to caring for the property and interacting with our management company.

Should you have questions, please try to direct them to the appropriate property manager listed below.

Please review this document and keep it on file for handy reference.

Your Property Manager is: A. S. Dalton

**Address: 4301 Cutshaw Ave., Richmond VA 23230**

You may e-mail them with questions at: [daltonrents@gmail.com](mailto:daltonrents@gmail.com)

## Paying rent

**Rent is due on the 1st day of each month** and may be mailed or hand delivered to our office. Make checks payable to A.S. Dalton and send to the address above. Rent may be paid by personal check, money order, or cashier's check. **Please do not send or drop off cash. Remember:** Late charges are assessed on the 6th of each month. **If mailing rent payment, it must be postmarked by the 3rd to avoid late charges.**

- Please put your name and rental address on your check / money order to ensure that you are properly credited with the payment.
- Be sure checks / money orders are completed with names of payer and payee. The management company is not responsible for cash or incomplete money orders left on the premises.
- Rent delivered to the management company should be deposited in our rent drop box during office hours or put through the mail slot in the *front door* after hours.

## Maintenance

- If a maintenance issue should arise, you may complete a maintenance request for and fax your request to 804.338.6824, or you may e-mail the work request to the property manager's attention at [daltonrents@gmail.com](mailto:daltonrents@gmail.com). We ask that you submit all maintenance requests in writing to avoid confusion and to ensure that we have a clear record of your request.
- When making a request, be specific about the problem and remember to include your name, address, and the best telephone number(s) to reach you.
- Tenants must be prepared to schedule time and make themselves available to let a contractor or repair person into the property, or give permission for the management company to provide a key for the contractor to enter in their absence.
- Tenants are responsible for securing any pets that the contractor may encounter on their visit to the property.

## Emergency Maintenance

- If you have an emergency that cannot wait until the next business day and it is before or after our regular business hours, you can call us at 804.338.6824. Be sure that you are using a phone that accepts incoming calls and be sure to be available to the phone.
- An emergency is a fire, flood, or any dangerous or hazardous situation.
- An emergency is not an annoying sound, outdoor sprinklers going off in the middle of the night, and so on.

## Locked Yourself Out?

- The management company keeps extra keys for each property. During regular business hours you may come by and borrow a key that must be returned to our office within 24 hours. You will be required to provide identification to check out the keys. After business hours, keys aren't available and you will have to call a locksmith.

- **During after hours, there are two locksmiths that are acceptable to call. Pop-A-Lock at 1-888-POP-OPEN (1-888-767-6736) and Budget Mobile Locksmith at 804-273-0027.**
- Be sure to carry all of your door keys (handle knob and deadbolt and main entrance door if applicable) with you. When contractors are authorized to enter a property to make a repair, they are required to secure the premises when they leave. That includes setting the deadbolts or locks whether you had set them or not.

## Care and Use Maintenance

The following information has been gathered in response to requests from residents looking for guidelines at move-in and move-out times. If you have questions about the use and care for items not on this list, please contact your property manager.

Some of our properties provide care manuals for appliances, and so on, provided by the owners. Please refer to them first whenever there is a problem. Answers are often found in these guides.

Please report unsafe or hazardous situations immediately.

## FURNACE and AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

- All tenants are responsible for cleaning or replacing the furnace filter on a monthly basis (best remembered and done at the beginning of each month). Problems caused by failure to clean / replace the filter may be the tenant's responsibility.
- Dust can accumulate at furnace vents as well as at fan vents. A small broom brushed across the vent openings will clear away any dust and help the furnace or fan operate efficiently.
- Should you lease a property where the tenant is responsible for paying for the oil to heat the property, please make arrangements with your property manager to have the heating system cleaned and serviced prior to the heating season (preferably in the Fall before the rush).

## ELECTRICAL SERVICE and HOT WATER OUTAGES

- If the power goes out in your unit or house, first check to see if the whole area or apartment building is without power. If it is out in the area, chances are the power company or Gas Company already knows about it, but you can try calling them to report it.
- If the power is only out in your house / unit, check the fuse or circuit breaker box. *Upon moving into the property familiarize yourself with the location of the fuse or circuit breaker box (should you not be able to locate it contact your property manager as soon as possible to avoid any delays should you lose power after hours).* One or more circuits may be tripped, and you may see the switches in the off position or a brown discoloration in the glassy area if you have fuses. If no switch is clearly in the off position, turn each switch off and then on again to reset the circuits. Should you have fuses, the fuse is like a screw that you will need to turn counter clockwise to remove. The new fuse (available at any grocery or drug store) would then be installed by inserting into the fuse holder and turning clockwise until tight. *The exact same fuse must be used to avoid a fire or to get power restored.* If this doesn't solve the problem replace each fuse until the power is restored. If you have tried everything listed above, contact your property manager or call the emergency number should your refrigerator be on the circuit without power. *(remember that it is the tenant's responsibility to reset circuit breakers or fuses should a circuit blow due to electrical overload caused by the tenant).*
- If either your gas furnace or gas hot water heater is not working, call the City of Richmond Gas Company at (804) 644-3000 first to have them check it out and/or relight the pilot. If there are additional problems, they will inform you as to what needs to be repaired. Contact your property manager with the information they provide to you.

## DRAINS

- Avoid letting food, hair, and excess soap get down the drains.
- Clogged drains caused by hair, grease, and soap are the tenant's responsibility. Some dishwashers will clog from food left on the dishes when put in the machine.
- An excellent drain cleaning / clearing solution recipe is 1 cup salt, 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup vinegar, followed by eight cups boiling water. We recommend performing this treatment monthly to avoid build-up. Do not use hard chemicals, liquid plumber or crystal draino to unstop clogged drain pipes. They can solidify in the pipes and cause damage for which the tenant would be responsible.

- Hardware stores carry “hair catchers” to place in sink and tub drains that significantly help keep drains free of hair.

## **GARBAGE DISPOSALS**

- Always run water while the disposal is operating to avoid damage to the unit. Let the water run long enough to grind all the material in the disposal. Then let the water run for 10-15 seconds after turning off the disposal. Learn to recognize the sound the machine makes when completely free of garbage.
- Disposals are designed to grind up organic items only. *Exceptions* include: banana peels, artichoke leaves, celery stalks, flower stems, coffee grounds, bones, or any item that is particularly tough. Never put paper, plastic, glass, aluminum foil, or grease in the disposal.
- Always be sure to check the power switch (usually under the sink), try the reset button (somewhere on the machine), and remove all contents before contacting your property manager for maintenance.  
**Remember:** Problems caused by users are the tenant’s responsibility.

## **REFRIGERATOR COILS / DRIP PANS**

- Keep coils on refrigerators free of dust
- Coils need free air flowing around them to operate efficiently. Failure to keep coils clean may cause the appliance motor to burn out.
- Some refrigerators have drip pans under them. If not kept clean, the pans can start to develop a strong odor. Please take the time to get acquainted with the appliances in your unit.

## **FIREPLACES**

- Fireplaces are not to be used under any circumstances.
- If your property manager and lease agreement allows you to use the fireplace, be sure to use a fireplace screen when a fire is burning to prevent hot ashes from burning the floor or floor coverings.
- Never dispose of ashes in anything other than a metal container. Ashes and coals remain hot and are a potential fire hazard for several days after the fireplace has been used. Any fire resulting from not properly using the fireplace or the disposal of ashes is the tenant’s responsibility. Smoke damage from not appropriately using the fireplace is also the tenant’s responsibility.
- If you are allowed to use the fireplace, please burn only hardwoods to minimize the buildup of creosote in the flue / chimney. Creosote buildup is a fire hazard.

## **OVEN RACKS and PANS**

- The easiest way to clean oven racks and pans is to put them in a heavy-duty garbage bag (do this outdoors), add 2 cups of ammonia and seal the bag. Let it sit for a couple of hours, and then carefully open the bag (being careful not to inhale the strong ammonia odor). Remove the racks and pans and the grease will wipe off with very little effort.

## **PLUMBING FIXTURES**

- Never use abrasives on brass or gold fixtures.
- It is best to wipe fixtures clean after each use.
- If brass needs to be polished, please use a product specifically designed for use on brass.
- Many homes and apartments have low-flow toilets. We strongly recommend that you keep a plunger nearby. Low-flow toilets tend to clog or back up if too much paper, and so on is flushed. Tenants must be prepared to plunge the toilet to clear clogs and avoid damage from overflows. *Tenant may be held responsible for the charge for unstopping a toilet and any damage resulting from the overflow of water if it is determined that they flushed an item or too much paper or paper towels down the drain.*

## **WATER DAMAGE**

- Tenants must take care to avoid water damage caused by allowing water to sit on counters and floors.
- Care must be taken to ensure that shower curtains are inside the tub (especially important on old claw foot tubs), and that shower doors are completely closed when taking a shower. If you have an older claw foot tub, make sure the curtain overlaps and there is no opening for water to get out onto the floor. Water on tile floors can seep through the grout and cause dry rot on the floorboards below. Water can also seep around the edges of vinyl linoleum and damage the flooring below. We recommend putting a mat, towel,

or rug on the floor to step on when exiting the tub or shower. *The tenant can be held responsible for water damages to lower apartment units should they not follow these guidelines.*

- Water can easily be splashed into the space behind the faucet in the kitchen or bath and damage the counter surface. Please be sure to keep these areas dry to prevent damage.

## **SLIDING GLASS DOORS, SCREEN DOORS, and SHOWER TRACKS**

- It is imperative that dirt and debris regularly be cleaned out of sliding door tracks. Rolling over dirt, leaves, and pine needles that frequently accumulate in the tracks can damage the wheels on sliding doors, especially the heavy glass sliders. Please make it part of your cleaning routine to clear the tracks.
- Please do not use oil or WD40 to lubricate slider doors or screens. It only attracts dirt and gums up the wheel mechanisms.
- In order to retard the growth of mold in the tracks and at the bottom of shower doors, keep the tracks clean. Use an old toothbrush and do a regular monthly cleaning; it's much easier than doing one major cleaning at move-out time!

## **MOLD**

- Bleach is the best product for removing mold that forms around the edges of showers, tubs, on tile walls, around metal windows, and anywhere there is moisture. The easiest way to remove mold is to cut paper towels in half and fold them into one-inch strips. Dip each strip into the bleach bottle and hold your finger against it as you draw it out. Lay the bleach-soaked strips directly on the mold and leave them there for several hours. It works like magic. Remember to use rubber gloves, and air out affected rooms. Avoid directly inhaling the fumes.

## **HOUSE PLANTS**

- Be sure drip pans are kept under all plants. Water runoff will stain or damage most surfaces. *Tenants may be held responsible for any water damage caused by watering their plants.*

## **KITCHEN COUNTERS**

- To avoid costly damage from nicks and cuts in counter tops, use a cutting board at all times.

## **CERAMIC TILE, FIBERGLASS TUB, and SHOWER WALLS**

- Dilute one part white vinegar in five parts water for cleaning all ceramic tiles and molded fixtures.
- Never use scrubbing abrasive cleaners like Comet or AJAX on molded fixtures, as these products will permanently scratch the surfaces.

## **MINI BLINDS**

- When cleaning mini blinds, don't soak them; the finish may bubble and peel. Spray them with a mild soap and water solution and wipe them. Weekly dusting or wiping can save a lot of work later.

## **SMOKE DETECTORS**

- The owner is to provide you with a working smoke detector upon moving into the property. **Check your smoke detector immediately upon moving in.** This can be done by pushing the button on the face of the detector or by blowing smoke onto the unit. Should you not be able to hear an alarm, contact your property manager immediately for a replacement of either the unit or battery. After move in, the tenants are responsible for keeping fresh batteries in the smoke detectors. We recommend changing batteries at the beginning and end of each daylight savings time.

## **WOOD DECKS / PORCHES**

- Potted plants and flowers add beauty and appeal to a property. If you have planters or pots, raise them off the deck a few inches to allow airflow beneath the pot, and to prevent water runoff from rotting the deck.
- Do not use tiki torches or grills on any porches or decks. *Damage to decks or porches from their use is the tenant's responsibility.*

## **HARDWOOD FLOORS**

- Never use a mop for cleaning or applying oil. Use a soft cloth only. It is best to sweep and dust regularly.

- Kitchen areas only: Once every three months clean floors with a small amount of vinegar in water.
- Periodically clean floors with Murphy's Oil Soap, following the directions on the label. *Do not apply paste wax to hardwood flooring.*
- Use throw rugs in front of the sink and the stove to protect these areas from water and grease.

## **MARBLE AND GRANITE**

- Never use any acidic or abrasive cleaning products, including vinegar. It is best to use warm water and a sponge with a small amount of dishwashing liquid such as Dawn or Joy.
- Marble is a porous material. Be careful that water runoff from plants is not left standing on the surface. It will permanently stain the marble.

## **BREAKING LEASE POLICY DURING A LEASE TERM**

- Contact your property manager to discuss whether or not the owner of the property will allow you to get out of your existing lease contract.
- If the property owner will allow, the following requirements must be adhered.
- The tenant needs to review and agree to the terms on the break lease form provided at our office. The tenant(s) must also pay a fee equal to one month's rent before their property manager will place the property on the market to re-lease.
- *The tenant is responsible for all their lease contract terms and conditions until a suitable replacement tenant has been located, they have been approved by the property manager, the replacement tenant signs a lease agreement and the replacement tenants take occupancy of the property.*
- The current tenant must arrange to perform a final walk through inspection with their property manager and return all keys prior to the replacement tenant moving in. *Should the keys not be returned the tenant will be held responsible for the expense to re-key the locks.*
- **Under no circumstances should a tenant allow someone to move into the property without the written consent of their property manager.**

## **REPLACING ONE TENANT WITH MULTIPLE LEASEHOLDERS DURING A LEASE TERM**

- Should a tenant want to change roommates during a lease term, they need to submit the request to their property manager in writing.
- The change may be allowed only with written permission by the property manager and with the landlord's approval.
- All leaseholders need to agree to the request in writing by signing a tenant replacement form supplied at the RentInRichmond.com office.
- Under no circumstances should a tenant allow someone to move into the property without the written consent of their property manager (this is a lease violation).
- The existing tenant requesting to be replaced needs to pay a fee equal to one entire month's rental rate.
- The existing tenant (and co-signer if applicable) is responsible for all lease terms and conditions until a replacement tenant is approved by their property manager and all existing lease holders (including any co-signers) and the incoming tenant (and co-signer if applicable) sign a new lease agreement for the dwelling unit.