



# Tenant Handbook & Landlord Rules

Welcome home! This tenant handbook provides important information about your new home and answers frequently asked questions. As you get settled into your new home, please be sure to provide us with any new contact information as soon as possible.

**Please remember to have all the utilities put in your name (where applicable) effective the first day of your lease.**

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

**Scott Douglass, Property Manager:**

[scott@shawrealestate.com](mailto:scott@shawrealestate.com)

281.947.2064 (call/text)

**Jay Shaw, Broker:**

[jay@shawrealestate.com](mailto:jay@shawrealestate.com)

**Tammy Grimes, Office Manager:**

[tammy@shawrealestate.com](mailto:tammy@shawrealestate.com)

**Aubrey Ringer, Office Assistant:**

[aubrey@shawrealestate.com](mailto:aubrey@shawrealestate.com)

**Office Phone: (832) 637-7042**

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY - DIAL 911**

### **Emergency Maintenance**

If you have a non-911 emergency that cannot wait until the next business day, you can call us at (832) 637-7042. A non-911 emergency is any dangerous or hazardous situation that does NOT require Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Service or other professional rescue.



# Tenant Guidelines

## PAYING RENT

Rent is due on the 1st of each month. Rent may be paid online through your tenant portal, Rent Cafe. Call for details. Per Texas Property code late charges may be assessed after the 3rd day of each month. For rent to be considered on time it must be received by management.

**Watertight Property Management will not be responsible for *cash or incomplete money orders left on the premises.***

## MAINTENANCE

If a maintenance issue should arise, you may complete a maintenance request online through your resident portal. When filling out the online service request form be sure to provide the following:

- Be specific about the problem and remember to include your name, address and the best number to reach you.
- Permission to enter your home. Please submit a time when you will be available to let a vendor or repair person into the property. If you select the "Anytime" option, the management office will enter your unit in your absence.
- Tenants are responsible for securing any pets that the vendor may encounter on their visit to the property.

## LOCKED YOURSELF OUT?

Watertight Property Management keeps extra keys for each property. During regular business hours you may contact our office to make arrangements to get a key. After business hours, keys are not available and you will have to call a locksmith. To avoid getting locked out of your home/unit, consider the following:

It's a good idea to leave a spare set of keys with a friend/neighbor. However, if you hide the keys and they are discovered, the locks should be changed and it will have to be at your cost.

Be sure to carry all of your door keys (handle and deadbolt) with you. When vendors 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 set them or not.



## CARE & USE INFORMATION

If you have questions about the use and care for items not on this list, please call Watertight Property Management. Most of our properties have care manuals for appliances, etc., provided by the owners. Please refer to them first whenever there is a problem. Answers are often found in these guides.

### **Lawn Care/Foundation Watering**

- Regularly mow the grass. A good range is to keep height around 2.5 to 3.5 inches. Don't cut more than one-third of the grass height at once.
- Water deeply but less frequently, aiming for 1 inch of water per week. Water in the morning or night to reduce evaporation.
- Use fertilizer according to soil test recommendations. Apply evenly and follow instructions carefully.
- Remove weeds promptly by hand or with tools. Minimize herbicide use, if able. Fill in bare spots with matching grass seed. Water lightly after overseeding.
- Remove excess leaves with a rake when needed to promote air and water circulation. Monitor regularly for signs of pests and diseases. Treat with targeted products if necessary, following instructions.

### **Furnace and Wall Heater Maintenance**

All tenants are responsible for cleaning or replacing the furnace filter at least once a month, preferably at the beginning of the month. Problems caused by failure to clean/replace the filter will be the tenant's responsibility. To care for your furnace and/or wall heaters please do the following:

Dust can accumulate at return air grills as well as at ceiling/wall grills. A small broom brushed across the vent openings will clear away any dust and help the furnace or fan operate efficiently. Prior to the heating season, please arrange to have a licensed HVAC company check your furnace/heater to be sure that it is in good operating condition. If they identify needed repairs, notify Watertight Property Management immediately. You may submit a request for service through your Tenant Portal at [www.watertightonline.com](http://www.watertightonline.com).

### **Gas Wall Heaters**

If your home has a gas wall heater, it is prudent to turn off the gas at the unit when the heater is not needed. On any gas appliance, new or older, if the pilot light goes out you may detect a gas odor, which should dissipate in a few minutes after airing out the room. If the odor persists call the utilities company immediately.



## **Power, Furnace, and Water Heater Outages**

If the power goes out in your unit or house, first check to see if the whole area is without power. If it is out in the area, chances are the utilities company already knows about it. You can, however, try calling them to report the problem.

If the power is only out in your house/unit, check the circuit breaker box. One or more circuits may be tripped and you may see the switches in the off position. If no switch is **off** turn each switch **off** then **on** to reset the circuits. If this doesn't solve the problem, report the problem to your management company, through the appropriate channels.

If either your furnace or water heater is not working, **call the utilities company 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. Call Watertight Property Management with the information they provide you.

## **Drains**

**Avoid letting food, hair, feminine products and excess soap get down the drains.** Clogged drains caused by hair, grease, feminine products 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 8 cups boiling water.

We recommend performing this treatment monthly to avoid build-up. Hardware stores carry "hair catchers" to place in sink and tub drains that significantly help keep drains free of hair.

## **Garbage Disposals**

**Be sure to 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 calling for maintenance. **Problems with the garbage disposal are the tenant's responsibility.**



## Refrigerator Coils and Drip Pans

Keep coils on refrigerators (especially sub-zeros) 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.** The replacement of a burned out motor due to dirty coils will be the tenant's responsibility. 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

Please burn only hardwoods in the fireplaces and wood stoves to minimize to buildup of creosote, etc. in the chimney. Creosote build-up is a fire hazard. Be sure a fireplace screen is in place when a fire is burning to prevent hot ashes from burning the floor or floor coverings.

Prior to the heating season, please arrange to have a professional chimney sweep company check your chimney to be sure that it is in good operating condition.

## Oven Racks and Drip 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, then carefully open the bag (without inhaling the strong odor). Remove racks & pans and the grease will wipe off with very little effort.

## Plumbing Fixtures and Surfaces

**Never use abrasives on fiberglass tubs/surrounds, marble, granite, chrome, nickel, 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, etc. is flushed. **Tenants must be prepared to plunge the toilet to clear clogs and avoid damage from over-flows.**

## 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, and that shower doors are completely closed when taking a shower. 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 linoleum and damage the flooring below. Place a mat, towel or rug on the floor for exiting the tub or shower. 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.



## **Freezing Weather/Hard Freezes**

Monitor weather forecasts for freezing temperatures and take preventive measures accordingly. Consider using a smart thermostat or temperature monitoring device to alert you of drops in temperature.

In the event of a hard freeze or freezing weather for a prolonged time please take the following actions:

- Insulate exposed pipes with foam pipe insulation or heat tape, especially in unheated areas like basements, crawl spaces, and attics.
- Before the freeze, drain water from outdoor pipes and irrigation systems to prevent freezing.
- If you have an irrigation system, use the system's blowout method to remove water from pipes.
- Shut off and drain outdoor faucets and hoses before freezing temperatures arrive. Install frost-proof outdoor faucets or hose bibs if possible.
- Provide a heat source near vulnerable pipes, such as a space heater or heat lamp in unheated areas.
- Keep garage doors closed to retain heat and protect exposed pipes inside. Keep cabinet doors open under sinks to allow warm air to circulate around pipes.

Inspect pipes regularly for signs of wear or damage, and report leaks or any issues promptly.

## **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. DO Not use oil or WD40 to lubricate slider doors or screens. They only attract dirt and gum up the wheel mechanisms. Aerosol furniture polish (such as Pledge Furniture Polish) is a good lubricant for these applications. 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**

Laundry 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. Hydrogen Peroxide is also effective in killing mold and mildew, however, it does not remove the stains like bleach.



## **Ceramic Tile - Molded and or Scummed Wet Areas**

To clean ceramic tiles and molded fixtures tiles follow these instructions:

Dilute 1 part white vinegar in 5 parts water

**Never use scrubbing cleansers like Comet or AJAX on molded fixtures**, as these products will permanently scratch the surfaces

Use a soft sponge and apply the solution to the molded areas

## **House Plants**

Be sure drip pans are kept under all plants. Water run-off will stain or damage most surfaces.

## **Kitchen Counters**

Marble is a porous material. Be careful that water run-off from plants is not left standing on the surface since it will permanently stain the marble. **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. To avoid costly damage from nicks and cuts in counter tops, please use a cutting board at all times. Do not use abrasive pads or products on granite, marble or any surface that may scratch. **Tenants will be responsible for any damages to kitchen counters during move out.**

## **Mini Blinds**

When cleaning mini blinds, don't soak them - the finish may bubble and peel. Spray them with a mild soap & water solution and wipe them. You can buy a spray cleaner which is inexpensive and easy to use, making cleaning a breeze. Weekly dusting or wiping can save a lot of work later.

## **Smoke and CO Detectors**

Tenants are responsible for keeping fresh batteries in smoke detectors. We recommend changing batteries when we change our clocks in the fall and spring. **Never disable or remove smoke/CO detectors as this will endanger you, your family and neighbors.** Repairs resulting from disabling or removing smoke detectors will result in fees to correct and possibly eviction. If you have broken or missing smoke detectors please alert management.

## **Wood Decks/Porches**

If you have planters or pots, please put raised trays under them so that they are off the deck a few inches. This will allow air to flow beneath the pot, and to prevent water run-off from rotting the deck.



**Hardwood Floors**

**Never use a mop or oil for cleaning hardwood floors.** Use a soft cloth to avoid scratching the surface. It is best to sweep and dust regularly to avoid build up of dirt. We recommend cleaning your hardwood floors in your home with a small amount of vinegar in water. Periodically clean floors with Murphy's oil following the directions on the label. We encourage the use of throw rugs in front of the sink and the stove to protect these areas from water and grease.

**Outdoor Cooking**

Take caution that outdoor cooking appliances are at least 10 feet from any combustible surface and never cook over a wooden deck or under a patio cover or carport or trees.

**Roofs, Gutters, and Overhangs**

If your free-standing house has gutters, it is the tenant's responsibility to keep them free of debris so that water can be directed away from the house. Leaves and debris can clog the flow and cause water to damage the overhang. The additional weight of water-logged debris can cause the gutters to be pulled away from the house. If you have difficulty in performing this maintenance contact your management company and they will assist you for a nominal fee.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

All tenants acknowledge receipt of the Tenant Handbook and Landlord Rules by signing below:

**Accepted By:**

Tenant Name:  
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

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