



Signing a Lease

Have your lease reviewed by a Housing Counselor at the Tenant Union.

You cannot break a lease; there is NO grace period for changing your mind after you sign!

Do not sign the lease unless you are presented with two, identical copies.

All roommates should be present at lease signing to avoid being liable for multiple rents!

Do NOT pay any money until you and the landlord sign the lease (deposit is given upon signing, NOT before).

Get ALL promises in writing in the lease, oral agreements are NOT binding.

Beware of new construction!

Housing Search Checklist

- Set a monthly budget
- Make a list of priorities (noise, parking)
- Request a list of landlords from the Tenant Union
- Research possible apartments
- Make appointments to view places that interest you (make sure to view the EXACT unit you will be signing for)
- Check landlord complaint records at Signing a Lease the Tenant Union

Housing Search Checklist

- Contact American Water (217-352-1420) to set up water
- Contact Ameren IP (800-755-5000) to set up electricity and/or gas
- Organize a time and location to pick up your keys with your landlord
- Complete a move-in condition report form
- Take pictures of anything that is not perfect
- Check to make sure your smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm have working batteries
- Check your lease to see what it says about how to hang items in your apartment
- Complete a roommate agreement form

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Housing Quick Tips



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Tenant Union
tenantunion.illinois.edu

Student Legal Services
odos.illinois.edu/sls

Housing Search

Set a monthly budget, Rent + Utilities + Food + Housewares = \$\$\$. Utilize the Tenant Union budget sheet found on our website.

Investigate neighborhoods before you sign a lease. What are your priorities? Noise? Access to grocery store? Near a bus line? Parking? Crime?

Request a list of landlords from the Tenant Union, this list is divided by numbers of complaints.

Visit the landlord's website (or call) to find out more about their rentals. Where are their apartments? How much will the apartment cost per month?

Make appointments to view the places that interest you. Use the apartment hunting checklist when you view the apartment and add any other questions about itmes you consider to be important. View the EXACT apartment you will be renting and closely examine its condition.

Check landlord complaint records at the Tenant Union and have your lease reviewed with us before you sign it!

Negotiating

There is NO grace period after signing a lease to change your mind!

If you and the landlord cannot agree to terms that satisfy you, you can always rent somewhere else. Discussing the lease with the owner or manager will also give you an idea about how reasonable or flexible that company can be.

To take out a sentence, just strike it out, in ink, and place your initials after the last word taken out. Be sure the landlord also places his or her initials, and the date, next to the change.

If you are adding a clause to the contract, find any available space and write in a complete sentence followed by landlord's and tenants' initials, if the landlord can print a new copy with the amendments typed that works too.



Moving In

About one month before your lease starts, contact the public utility companies to arrange to start service before your lease begins.

Call the landlord in advance to arrange a time and location for picking up your keys.

Complete a condition report form and take pictures of everything that is not 100% perfect, when you move in.

Check your smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm to be sure each has a working battery.

Check your lease before using poster putty, tape or any other adhesive to hang posters on the wall.

If you have roommates, visit the Tenant Union and complete a roommate agreement form.

Moving Out

Take photographs to prove that you cleaned and have done no damage.

Contact the public utility companies to arrange for termination of service.

Complete a change of address form at the post office so that your mail will be forwarded. This protects your rights regarding deposit refund and prevents loss of other mail. Go to www.usps.com/umove

Return all keys directly to the landlord and obtain a receipt for the keys