



# Virginia Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities under the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act as of July 1, 2022

This is a summary of tenants' rights and responsibilities under the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act. This summary does not modify your lease or Virginia law. A lease cannot give up a tenant's rights under the law. The information below is not intended as legal advice. Tenants with questions are encouraged to contact their local legal aid program at (866) 534-5234 or [valegalaid.org/find-legal-help](http://valegalaid.org/find-legal-help).

## Tenant Right

### Applications:

Tenants may be charged a nonrefundable application fee of no more than \$50 (not including third party costs for a background check) and a refundable application deposit. If the tenant does not rent the unit, the application deposit must be returned, minus any actual costs or damages. (§55.1-1203)

### Written lease:

Under the VRLTA, a landlord is required to provide a tenant a written lease. If a landlord fails to do so, the VRLTA still protects a tenant by establishing a statutory lease between landlord and tenant for 12 months not subject to automatic renewal. (§55.1-1204)

### Disclosure:

A landlord must reveal certain information to the tenant, including any visible evidence of mold (§55.1-1215), the name and address of the owner or property manager (§55.1-1216) and notice of sale or foreclosure of the property. (§§55.1-1216, 1237).

### Security Deposit:

A landlord may require a security deposit of up to two month's rent. Within five days of move in the tenant has a right to object to anything in the move-in report. The tenant also has a right to be present at a move-out inspection, which must be made within 72 hours of delivery of possession. (§§55.1-1214, 1226)

### Receipts:

Upon request, a tenant is entitled to a written receipt of rent paid by cash or money order. Upon request, a tenant is entitled to a written statement of all charges and payments over the past 12 months. (§55.1-1204(D), (I))

### Privacy:

A landlord may not release information about a tenant without consent, except under certain conditions, which are generally when tenant information is already public. (§55.1-1209)

### Fit and Habitable Premises:

A tenant has the right to a fit and habitable rental unit in accordance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code. The landlord must make all repairs needed to keep premises fit and habitable. (§55.1-1220) To enforce the right to get repairs, a tenant must be current in rent, give the landlord written notice and wait a reasonable period. If repairs are not made, a tenant can file a Tenant's Assertion in General District Court. This must be filed no later than five days after rent is due. There is no rent withholding in Virginia, except under repair and deduct. (§55.1-1244)

### Repair and Deduct:

If an issue on the property affects life, health, safety, or seriously affects habitability, and a landlord has not begun to address it within 14 days after written notice from the tenant, the tenant may contract to have the repair done by a

licensed contractor at a cost of not more than \$1,500, or one month's rent, whichever is more. The tenant may deduct the actual cost of the repair from the rent. The tenant must send the landlord an itemized invoice and a receipt for payment to the contractor for the work, along with any payment of remaining rent owed. (§55.1-1244.1)

### **Eviction:**

A landlord may not evict a tenant without following the court eviction process. The landlord first sends a written notice and next the landlord files an unlawful detainer lawsuit. The landlord must get a court order of possession, followed by a Writ of Eviction that is served by the Sheriff. (§§55.1-1245, 1252). A tenant not getting paid due to a federal shutdown of 14 or more days can get an eviction lawsuit for nonpayment of rent postponed for 60 days. (§44-209)

### **Unlawful Exclusion, Interruption of Essential Services, and Unlivable Premises:**

A Landlord may not unlawfully exclude a tenant from the premises, interrupt an essential service, or make the unit unlivable. If this happens, the tenant may sue the landlord in General District Court and get an initial court hearing in five calendar days. At this hearing, a court may order the landlord to give the property back to the tenant, resume the essential service, or fix the conditions that make the unit unlivable. The court may also hold a second hearing 10 days after the first hearing and may find that the tenant is entitled to actual damages, statutory damages, and reasonable attorney's fees. (§55.1-1243.1)

### **Redemption (Pay & Stay):**

After an unlawful detainer lawsuit for nonpayment of rent is filed, a tenant has the right to pay to a zero balance on or before the court date and have the lawsuit dismissed. After a court issues a judgment of possession, a tenant has the right to pay to a zero balance up to 48 hours before the Sheriff's eviction and have the eviction cancelled. If the landlord has 5 or more rentals, a tenant may use these rights at any time. If the landlord has 4 or fewer rentals, the landlord may limit the tenant's use of these rights to once during the lease period if the landlord first sends a written notice. (§55.1-1250)

## **Tenant Responsibilities**

### **Rent:**

Unless the lease says otherwise, rent is due in equal payments each month on or before the first of each month. (§55.1-1204)

### **Late Fees:**

If rent is not paid on time, the tenant must pay a late fee if the lease requires one. A late fee can be no more than 10% of the monthly rent, or 10% of the unpaid balance, whichever is less. (§55.1-1204(E))

### **Insurance:**

A tenant may be required to have and pay for renter's insurance. A tenant also may be required to have and pay for damage insurance and/or a security deposit, but the total of both the damage insurance premiums and the security deposit may not exceed two months' rent. (§§55.1-1206, 1208)

### **Access:**

A tenant must allow a landlord access to the unit at reasonable times and for practical purposes, such as maintenance, inspection, or to provide services. A tenant must allow access unless the landlord's request is unreasonable. Unless impractical due to an emergency, the landlord must give 72-hours' notice of maintenance. If the tenant requests maintenance, notice is not required. (§55.1-1229)

### **Maintain Fit and Habitable Premises:**

The tenant must keep the rental unit as clean and safe as conditions allow and in accordance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code. The tenant must promptly notify the landlord of visible mold and use reasonable efforts to prevent



# Acknowledgement of Receipt of Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

moisture and mold. The tenant must promptly notify the landlord of insects or pests and must not be at fault in failing to prevent insects or pests. ([§55.1-1227](#))

## Fair Housing:

The tenant may have a right to file a fair housing complaint if the landlord or property manager violates the Virginia Fair Housing Act. ([§36-96.1 et seq](#))

In accordance with [Section §55.1-1204](#) of the Code of Virginia, the undersigned parties hereby acknowledge that with respect to the dwelling unit known as:

The Landlord has provided to the Tenant and the Tenant has received the Statement of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities developed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and posted on its website ([dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources](http://dhcd.virginia.gov/landlord-tenant-resources)) pursuant to [Section §36-139](#) Code of Virginia.

_____	_____	_____
Landlord Signature	Printed Name	Date
_____	_____	_____
Landlord Agent (if applicable)	Printed Name	Date
_____	_____	_____
Tenant Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Tenant Signature	Printed Name	Date
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