



Tenant Handbook

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT & LEASING SPECIALISTS

Phone (866) 665-9913 * Fax (800) 507-0866



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INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to your new home and thank you for selecting a property professionally managed by American Trust Properties! We look forward to working with you over the months ahead and have prepared this *Handbook* to assist you in properly maintaining your home and to answer some of the most commonly asked questions. Please take a moment to read it and keep it handy for reference. First, a few basic facts about your lease:

- The lease agreement (Deed of Lease) is a legal contract between you and your landlord. American Trust Properties is a legal agent for the landlord acting under the authority and direction of the landlord by way of a property management agreement, but is not a party to the lease. It is our responsibility to collect rent, arrange for any necessary maintenance or repairs, inspect the property periodically and answer any questions or concerns that may arise with respect to the home or your lease agreement. You will most likely never meet your landlord.
- Rental payments are to be made to American Trust Properties and are due in our office no later than the 1st day of each month. If payment is not received on the 1st, it is late. If payment is not received by the 3rd, a late fee is assessed. Seriously delinquent rents are reported to Equifax, the nation's largest credit bureau which could affect your personal credit rating. If there are others on your lease, make sure you send us only one check as we are not able to accept multiple payments. Should the bank return a check to us for any reason it will not be re-deposited and certified funds in the amount of the check will be required. In addition, a \$50.00 handling charge and a late fee will be assessed.
- The duration of your lease is fixed. Any early termination or extension of the lease must be negotiated with your landlord.
- Your security deposit can not be used to pay the last month's (or any other month's) rent unless your landlord gives us written permission for you to do so.
- Pets are allowed only with prior approval of the landlord and only where permitted by the homeowners or condominium association. There is typically a higher security deposit required of tenants with pets. When you move out, you must have the home professionally treated for odor and pests.

- Your landlord will maintain all items referenced in the lease as "Fixtures Provided", except those which are noted in "As-Is Condition", provided a malfunction is not caused or aggravated by tenant abuse or neglect. "As-Is Condition" means that the landlord makes no representations as to the condition of the item and is not responsible for repair should it prove inoperable or break during your tenancy. However, tenants will be held responsible for any damages that result from abuse or neglect of the item. Tenants must promptly notify us when there is equipment or system failure or a structural defect. When it is deemed appropriate and authorized by the landlord, American Trust Properties will arrange for repairs. Tenants may not make repairs and deduct them from rental monies owed unless specifically authorized by the landlord.

- If you lose your keys or lock yourself out of your home you may come to our office during regular business hours and we will lend you a set of keys. These must be returned within one week or you will be charged \$25 to replace them. If the lockout occurs during non-business hours and you must call a locksmith, it will be at your expense. Should you desire to change the locks on your home this may be done only with permission from the landlord and will be at your expense. The original of the new key(s) and one copy must be given to American Trust Properties.

- Tenants are responsible for the following routine maintenance items:
 - a. Replacement of light bulbs and electrical fuses if applicable
 - b. Cleaning or replacement of furnace filters regularly
 - c. Regular lawn maintenance if applicable
 - d. Replacement of batteries in smoke detectors and garage door openers.
 - e. Pest control
 - f. Having all carpeted surfaces including steps professionally cleaned and returning all keys, garage door openers, etc. upon vacating home.

- If your home has outside faucets (hose bibs) the inside shut-off valves have all been closed prior to your occupancy. Refer to your Property Condition Report to determine the location of these valves which are labeled with green tags. At the same time, located the main water shut-off valve which is labeled with a red tag. In a water related emergency, close this valve immediately. Should you elect to open the valves to activate the outside faucets you must remember to close the valves prior to the winter season. You will be held responsible for any damage that may occur should you fail to do so!



- The use of available condominium or association amenities such as a swimming pool, tennis courts, parking garage or lot, party or recreation room, storage area or laundry facility may require a special permit, pass or identification card. Tenants are responsible for obtaining these items unless otherwise noted. If your residence is within city limits be sure to obtain any street parking permit that may be required.
- Approximately 60 days prior to the expiration of your lease term American Trust Properties will begin the marketing process to find a new tenant. This will include the mounting of an electronic lockbox on your door and if you have a yard, the installation of a signpost. Realtors will be instructed to call before showing the home but if no one is home they may access the electronic lockbox to enter the home. If a yard signpost is installed the sign rider will indicate "For Rent" until a tenant has been found. Then the sign rider will be changed to indicate "Rented" and remain in place until the date the new lease commences. Under no circumstances may you remove, relocate or alter the yard sign!

This summary is not part of your lease; *it is only provided to clarify certain aspects of the agreement. Read your lease carefully, familiarize yourself with its contents and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need any additional information.*

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

An emergency is specifically defined as flooding, no heat during the winter season, a gas leak, fire or an issue that needs to be addressed immediately to avoid damage to the property or to your personal well-being. Air conditioning failure, appliance malfunction, drain stoppage and the like while inconvenient are not considered emergencies and will be handled by our office on the next business day. If you experience an emergency situation, please take the steps outlined below. Note that if the problem occurs in the middle of the night it is unlikely that we will be able to dispatch a contractor to the property immediately so try to contain the emergency and contact us early in the morning.

HEATING SYSTEM FAILURE

Electric Heat

- 1) Check the thermostat to see that the controls are set properly.
- 2) Check all fuses and circuit breakers.
- 3) Check the access panel to the blower compartment; the blower will not operate if the panel is not securely closed.
- 4) If unable to restore operation, contact this office.

Gas Heat

- 1) Check the thermostat to see that the controls are set properly.
- 2) Check the access panel to the blower compartment; the blower will not operate if the panel is not securely closed.
- 3) Test any other gas appliances to determine if service has been interrupted.
- 4) If unable to restore operation, contact this office.

Oil Heat

- 1) Make sure the emergency shut off switch is in the "on " position.
- 2) Check oil level in the fuel tank.
- 3) Check thermostat, fuses and circuit breakers and blower compartment panel.
- 4) If unable to restore operation, contact office.

In all instances, slightly open an indoor faucet and allow it to drip to prevent freezing until the heating system is operational.

WATER-RELATED

If water is running onto floors from any appliance, fixture, or pipe **close either the shut-off valve for the appliance or fixture or the main shut-off valve for the property.** If you reside in a condominium with on-site management, contact them immediately. Otherwise, contact this office immediately.

FIRE

Your residence is equipped with smoke detectors which should alert you of the presence of fire or smoke. It is also a good idea to keep a fire extinguisher on the premises at all times. Should you have an emergency, contact the fire department immediately. If you reside in a condominium with on-site management, contact them immediately.

CARE OF FIXTURES & APPLIANCES

FURNACE

Familiarize yourself with the operation of the thermostat; the fan switch should always be set on "66 degrees". Set the other switch to the appropriate "heat" or "cool". If you have an electronic or energy saving thermostat, consult the manual for operating instructions. Be sure to clean or change the furnace filter regularly - even electronic filters must be cleaned periodically. Remember, heat pumps usually do not circulate warming air as gas furnaces do unless they are run on the "Emergency Heat" setting which activates the resistance heat mechanism.

HUMIDIFIER

See that the water supply valve is open. Set the control (usually located on or near the furnace) to your comfort level. Set it to the "off" position during the cooling season and shut off the water supply valve.

CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING

Air conditioning can only lower the inside temperature from that of the outside by 10 to 15 degrees. With this in mind, the thermostat should not be set below 70 degrees.

WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS

These machines should be operated conservatively as they are susceptible to icing, particularly at lower fan speeds.

STOVE OR OVEN

Be aware of the various bake, broil, time bake, and self-clean controls. To operate the self-cleaning feature, follow the instructions on the appliance. For continuous-cleaning ovens use soap and water; **never** use oven cleaners or abrasives as this will ruin the finish.

MICROWAVE OVEN

Use only microwave safe cookware and other approved non-metal items to prevent melting. Keep all inside surfaces clean, especially the top panel. Never place metal objects inside or touch the infrared rotor.

REFRIGERATOR

Make sure the drain at the bottom of the machine (under vegetable bins) is unobstructed. If possible, periodically move the appliance to clean underneath. In addition, remove the front grill to vacuum the coil area and clean the drip pan.

DISHWASHER

Use dishwasher detergent only, never laundry or other soap. Always rinse dishes before washing; keep the strainer at the bottom of the machine clean and free of debris. Water should not flow out of the air gap into the sink during the drain cycle - if this happens, the air gap may be clogged.

GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Run Cold Water while in use. Do not put onion skins, celery, corn husks, bones, or any other hard or stringy items in the disposal. If the machine jams, turn it off and clean out. If it still will not operate, push the red reset button (usually located on the bottom of the unit). Remember, disposals are not garbage cans!

EXHAUST FAN OR RANGE HOOD

Clean filter screens regularly; keep entire unit clean and free of grease buildup.

COUNTER TOPS

Kitchen counters are easily burned and scratched. Do not put hot objects directly on them and do not slice food on them. Avoid placing cigarettes on counter edges.

CLOTHES WASHER

Use laundry detergent only, never dishwasher or other soap. If the machine has a lint filter, clean it after every use. Do not overload. If the washer shuts off or makes a banging noise during the spin cycle, stop cycle and rearrange clothes to balance the load.

CLOTHES DRYER

Clean lint filter after every use. Do not overload and do not attempt to dry sneakers with this appliance.

HARDWOOD FLOORS

Hard floors typically either a polyurethane or a regular wax finish. In either circumstance avoid using water on floors as this will ruin the finish. Polyurethane floors should not be waxed however there are several cleaning products that may be applied. If the floors have a wax finish make sure that the high traffic areas are well maintained to prevent damage. Wax floors should be cleaned, waxed and buffed at least twice a year. Review your lease to see if you are required to cover a percentage of these floors with area rugs.

LIGHT FIXTURES

Do not use a light bulb of higher wattage than a given fixture was intended to have, especially in ceiling fixtures. This may damage the fixture and could be a fire hazard. Sixty watts is generally the highest wattage recommended for any light fixture.

WALL-TO-WALL CARPET

Vacuum regularly. Immediately treat all spills and stains with carpet cleaner; do not over-saturate.

FIREPLACE

Be sure the damper is completely open before use. Avoid excessive use of chemically treated "firelogs" as these leave potentially flammable residues on the chimney walls. Remove ashes regularly.

MAINTENANCE

INTERIOR

Furnace

- 1) Set the thermostat to the appropriate “heat/winter” or “cool/summer” position.
- 2) Check to see that all supply and return air vents are clean and unobstructed.
- 3) Make sure the condensation drain (central air only) is not clogged or obstructed.
- 4) If you have a radiant heat system, make sure there are no leaking valves or radiators.
- 5) Clean or replace the filter regularly.

Fireplace (where applicable)

- 1) Be sure the damper is in good operating condition. Damper should be closed unless fireplace is in use.
- 2) See that the flue and chimney are unobstructed. Periodic inspection and cleaning is strongly recommended, however this is typically at tenant's expense.

Smoke Detectors

- 1) Test all smoke detectors frequently to see that they are operating properly. Battery operated models will begin making an intermittent beeping sound when the battery runs low.



EXTERIOR

Lawn and Shrubbery (where applicable)

- 1) Cut grass and prune shrubs as needed. Remove all leaves in the fall; check with your neighbors for disposal procedures.
- 2) If necessary, contact authorities for information on damaging insect control.

Gutters

- 1) All gutters should be free of leaves and debris. Downspouts should drain away from the foundation.

Winterization of Outside Faucets and Electrical Outlets (where applicable)

- 1) Close all shut-off valves (green tags) to outside faucets, then open the faucets. Be sure to close faucets before opening shut-off valves in the spring.
- 2) See that all outside electrical outlets are capped if possible or disconnect the appropriate fuses or circuit breakers.



VACATING CHECKLIST

We understand that your last few weeks of residence will be exceptionally busy ones. However, we do request that you attend to a number of small but important details:

- We must know the exact date the home will be completely vacant so that we may represent the property as being available for new tenants on that date and so that the final inspection can be scheduled.
- If vacating in winter, set the thermostat no lower than 60 degrees to prevent freezing of pipes. If your home is heated with oil, do not forget to have the oil tank filled before you vacate.
- We must have your forwarding address.
- All utilities must remain on until the final day of your lease unless otherwise authorized and you must provide us with proof of payment of your final water bill where applicable.

Please remember that a certain amount of cleaning is expected of you when you move out. It is our goal to refund 100% of your security deposit and by following the checklist below you will help us achieve that goal. If you need assistance with any of these items we have a list of professionals that we can refer you to.

KITCHEN

- _____ All exhaust fans and vent covers should be in working order and free of dust and grease. Filter screens can be washed in the dishwasher.
- _____ Kitchen cabinets, shelves, drawers, and counter tops must be washed inside and outside and all shelf liner removed.

- _____ Refrigerators and freezers must be cleaned inside and outside. They must also be pulled out and all dust and dirt must be removed from the back, sides, floor, and walls surrounding the appliance. Leave refrigerators and freezers running; do not disconnect or turn them off.
- _____ Stoves, ovens, cooktops, and microwaves, must be cleaned inside and outside, including the areas around and underneath them. Do not use steel wool on appliances; plastic scrub pads work best. Be sure to operate the self-clean cycle if applicable.
- _____ Dishwashers and trash compactors must be cleaned inside and outside, especially the inside lip of the door.
- _____ All sinks, faucets and garbage disposals must be washed out and wiped clean
- _____ Kitchen walls and floors must be washed and free of stains, dust, dirt, and grease. Any floors that need to be oiled or waxed must be treated as required.

BATHROOMS

- _____ All bathroom floors and walls must be cleaned with particular attention paid to the grout and caulking.
- _____ All tubs, showers, sinks, and commodes must be cleaned, disinfected and free of soap scum and cleanser residues.
- _____ All medicine cabinets, vanities and drawers must be cleaned inside and outside, and shelf liners removed. All mirrors should be wiped.

ALL ROOMS

- _____ If you have made any alterations to the home, including painting, you must restore it to its original condition unless otherwise agreed to.
- _____ All non-carpeted floors should be free of stains, dust and debris and should be washed and waxed where appropriate.
- _____ All windows, screens, storm windows and window sills must be washed. This includes the area between the sash (interior window) and storm windows or screens.
- _____ All window treatments such as curtain rods, shades and blinds that were provided must be cleaned and left in good working order.
- _____ Sliding glass doors must be wiped and the door tracks must be cleaned.
- _____ All walls, ceilings and closet interiors must be free of smudges, grease and food stains. A light cleanser such as "Softscrub" will remove black marks from walls.
- _____ All woodwork, moldings, trims, doors and baseboards must be free of dirt, dust and stains.
- _____ All electrical outlets and switch plates must be free of dirt and smudges.
- _____ All light bulbs must be in working order and light fixtures must be cleaned inside and out.
- _____ All smoke detectors must be in working order with fresh batteries.
- _____ Laundry and utility rooms must be free of dust, dirt and debris.
- _____ Washing machine exterior must be cleaned and the inside left free of soap residue.

- _____ Dryer exterior must be cleaned and the filter screen left free of lint.
- _____ Furnace filters must be changed.
- _____ All fireplaces must be broom swept and free of ashes, wood and debris.
- _____ All carpeted surfaces including steps must be professionally cleaned by an APPROVED VENDOR with a copy of the paid receipt available at the time of the final inspection. If you have a pet, carpets must also be treated for odor and pests. Should carpets be unsatisfactorily cleaned and/or treated by an unapproved vendor, they will be cleaned and/or treated again at your expense.

GROUNDS

- _____ All trash, yard debris, and personal items must be removed from the property. If trash collection is not scheduled for the day you vacate, please make arrangements ahead of time to have the bulk removed prior to that date. A minimal amount of trash may be left at the curb or pick up point.
- _____ If there was a supply of firewood when you moved in then a like amount should be left on departure. Please make sure it is not stacked against the home.
- _____ If you have an oil tank it must be filled.
- _____ All flower and shrub beds must be clean and free of weeds, leaves, and debris. Be advised we do not consider leaves and debris to be mulch.
- _____ All shrubs must be neatly trimmed.

- _____ All grass must be cut and free of debris.
- _____ All walkways must be swept and free of weeds.
- _____ If your vehicle has leaked oil in the garage or driveway the oil stain must be removed. There are a number of products available that will accomplish this.
- _____ If you have a garage, please make sure it is swept clean. If there were tools present when you moved in make sure they are all in place when you leave.
- _____ If you have a tool shed please sweep it. Clean up any chemical spills and make sure all tools are in their proper place.
- _____ All garden tools must be cleaned, including BBQ grills.
- _____ Gutters and downspouts must be free of leaves and debris.

PEST

- _____ You are responsible for the elimination of any pests present in or about the home prior to vacating. Fleas and roaches can be particularly difficult to eradicate, so please make every effort to see that the home is left pest free, especially if you have a pet. Should an infestation of any kind be discovered after you move out, it will be treated at your expense.



TENANT HANDBOOK

KEYS

_____ All keys, garage door openers, parking placards, etc., will be collected at the time of the final inspection. Kindly place these items in an envelope and leave in plain sight on the kitchen counter.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

_____ Your deposit can be refunded after the final inspection. If damage is noted, we must receive estimates or invoices from vendors before your deposit can be returned minus the cost of damage. This can take up to 30 days from the date of the inspection. Remember to provide us with your forwarding address and proof of payment of your final water bill where applicable.

Note: Your Lease Agreement terminates at 5:00 p.m. on the final day of your tenancy. All cleaning, carpet treatment, yardwork, etc. (except for final exterior trash pick-up) must be finished at this time. Should you not fulfill all of these obligations, they will be completed for you by American Trust Properties at your expense.

Thank you for your cooperation.

AMERICAN TRUST PROPERTIES