



Tenant Hotline

Phone: 612-728-5767

Online: [homelinemn.org/email](https://www.homelinemn.org/email)

# Back to School - Housing Advice for Students

2025 CLE Training

August 13, 2025

1:30pm - 3:00pm

# What is HOME Line?

HOME Line Tenant Hotline:

**612-728-5767**

Toll-free: 866-866-3546

- Para Español, llame al 612-255-8870
- Af- Soomaali wac 612-255-8860
- Hais lus Hmoob, Hu 612-255-7104
- Online: *[homelinemn.org/email](http://homelinemn.org/email)*



# Housekeeping

- This session is being recorded and will be available on HOME Line's website in a few days
- Please ask questions through the Q&A function located at the bottom of the Zoom window
- CLE credits will be applied for after this session



# Agenda

## **Part I – Finding a Home**

- Types of Housing
- Utilities
- Researching a Home
- Move in and Move Out  
Inspections
- Other Resources Available

## **Part II – College Specific Issues**

- Roommates
- Guests
- Parties & Get Togethers
- Repairs



# Finding a Home

Ama Carrion, HOME Line

# Types of Housing

- Apartments
- Single Family Homes
- Multi-Family Homes
  - Duplexes
  - Triplexes
- Room Leases



# Apartments vs. Room Leases

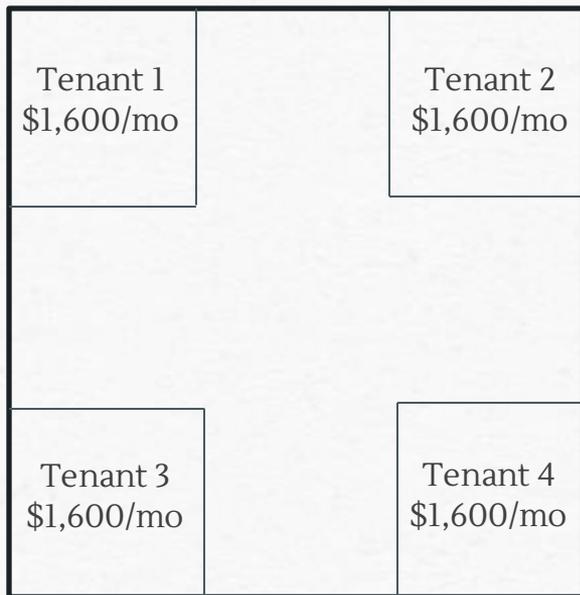
- Apartments
  - Each tenant is “jointly and severally liable” for rent payments
- Room Leases
  - Each tenant is only responsible for the rent payment for their room



# Apartments vs. Room Leases



Room Lease



Apartment



# Utilities

- Look at lease to see what utilities are included vs. what tenant(s) pay for
  - No requirement that landlord or tenant pay for certain utilities – governed by terms of the lease
  - 504B.120 – all non-optional fees disclosed on page 1 of the lease



# Utilities

- Single Meter Billing, 504B.216
  - Landlord must be bill payer and customer of record for single meter buildings
  - Applies to natural gas, water, and sewage
  - Cannot apportion electricity from a single meter (must sub-meter)
  - Late fees capped at \$5, admin fees capped at \$8
  - Mandatory disclosures (Subd. 10)



# Utilities

- Single Meter Billing, Electricity
  - Can only use sub-meters. No shared or single meters allowed
  - Charges calculated by multiplying the kilowatt-hour reading by the rate charged by the utility provider
  - Any bill credits or adjustments must be passed onto tenants



# Utilities

- Single Meter Billing, Natural Gas
  - Can use a shared meter or individual meters
  - If using a shared meter apportionment is based on square footage of tenant's unit
  - Cannot be billed for natural gas used in common areas
  - Any bill credits or adjustments must be passed onto tenants



# Utilities

- Single Meter Billing, Water and Sewage
  - Can use a shared meter or individual meters
  - If using a shared meter apportionment is based on number of tenants of tenant's unit
  - Cannot be billed for water used in common areas
  - Any bill credits or adjustments must be passed onto tenants



# Utilities, Examples

Total NG Bill	\$500
Square Footage of All Units	10,000
Cost Per Square Foot (500 ÷ 10,000)	\$ 0.05
Tenant's Unit Square Footage	800
Tenant's NG Bill (\$ 0.05 x 8)	<b><u>\$ 40</u></b>

Natural Gas, Example

Total NG Bill	\$1,000
Total Tenants in Building	250
Cost Per Tenant (10,000 ÷ 250)	\$ 4
Tenants in Apartment	3
Tenant's Water Bill (\$4 x 3)	<b><u>\$ 12</u></b>

Water, Example



# Fees

- Most apartments will charge administrative and other various fees
- Must be disclosed on page 1 of the lease (504B.120)
- Any non-optional fees (parking spot, pet fees, etc.) don't need to be disclosed on page 1 of the lease, but must be disclosed somewhere in the lease



# Before Signing a Lease

- Do your research – if possible visit the building in person
  - Ask to view both the unit you are applying for and the common areas
- Check court records
  - Rent escrow
  - Conciliation court
  - Evictions



# Before Signing a Lease

- Rental Licensing
  - Required in Minneapolis & St. Paul
  - Required in Duluth
  - Required in Rochester
  - Required in Morris
  - Required in Crookston
- Minneapolis and Saint Paul rental licenses can be searched online



# Before Signing a Lease

- Don't feel rushed to sign a lease
  - A signed lease is a binding contract regardless of if you read it
- Don't rely on verbal promises
  - A written lease is a “fully integrated” agreement
  - Verbal promises are largely unenforceable if not included in the lease
- Have questions about your lease? Contact Home Line or Student Legal Services



# Move In Inspection

- Landlords must offer a move in inspection within 14 days of the lease beginning
- If an inspection isn't offered do one on your own. Document what is both normal and broken
- Take photos or videos and back up online



# Move In Inspection

- If a checklist is used be thorough and keep a copy for yourself
- Purpose – establish a baseline of what the property looks like when you moved in



# Other Resources

- Minnesota Attorney General – Landlords and Tenants Rights and Responsibilities Handbook
- HOME Line
- University of Minnesota Student Legal Services



# Other Resources

- Legal Aid
  - Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
  - Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
  - Justice North
  - Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota
- LawHelpMN.org
- Volunteer Lawyers Network





# College Specific Issues

Shana Tomenes, Student Legal Services

# Roommates & Legal Considerations

# Selecting Roommates

- When selecting a roommate, make sure to discuss:
  - Ability to pay rent
  - Lifestyle & study habits
  - Cleanliness
  - Thoughts on guests
  - Need for pets or service animals



# Selecting Roommates

- Landlords are not required to allow you to break your lease due to roommate disputes
  - Exception: victims of violence may break a lease if experiencing fear of imminent violence after being subjected to domestic abuse, criminal sexual conduct, sexual extortion, or harassment



# Individual vs. Joint Leases

- Individual Lease

- Only responsible for the rental amount listed in lease
- Common in larger apartment complexes near college campuses
- Rent private access to a bedroom and shared access to living areas (ex: kitchen, living room, etc.)
- Tend to be more expensive per month

- Joint Lease

- Each tenant is responsible for the total listed sum on lease (regardless of how you and your roommates decide to split rent)
- Common in smaller apartment complexes and in single-family homes near campus, as well as larger rental community
- Rent joint access to full space
- Most risky legal choice



# Guests and Parties

# Guests

- Right to guests
- Couch surfer leasing issues
  - Check your lease – landlords near campus will often regulate how many days a guest may stay without prior permission
  - Tenants are responsible for the conduct of their guests (noise complaints, damage to property, etc.)



# Parties

- Best practices before hosting a gathering
  - Check your lease and community rules (incorporated in your lease) for:
    - Number of guests allowed in your unit at one time
    - Quiet hours
    - Types of prohibited activities (ex: smoking, vaping, kegs, etc.)



# Parties

- Be a good roommate and neighbor
  - If hosting a house party, check with neighbors and minimize any impact to the neighborhood
  - Tell guests of rules (ex: no talking in the hallway, no smoking within 20 feet of building, no loud gathering on the outside porch, etc.)
  - If serving alcohol, provide clear labeling on alcoholic beverages, only invite people over the legal age, and provide snacks



# Risks of Hosting Parties

- City fines or fines from your landlord for rules violations
- Eviction
- Potential civil & criminal liability
  - Civil liability for conduct of minors (Minn. Stat. § 340A.90)
  - Unlawful Assembly (Minn. Stat. § 609.705)
  - Disorderly Conduct (Minn. Stat. § 609.72)
- Disciplinary action under your college's student conduct code



# The Right to Reasonable Repair

# Repair Requests Best Practices

- Do not wait to report items needing repair
- Be specific in your writing of the nature of the repair needed
- Take pictures of the initial item needing repair, as well as repair progress and any impact it has on your enjoyment of the home



# Repair Requests Best Practices

- Follow up in writing when maintenance does not come on a scheduled day
- Follow up if repair is not completed by legal deadline
  - Call city inspector
  - File suit



# Emergency Repairs (Minn. Stat. § 504B.381)

- Landlord must complete repairs for the following items within 24 hours of written notice
  - A serious infestation
  - The loss of running water
  - The loss of hot water
  - The loss of heat
  - The loss of electricity
  - The loss of sanitary facilities
  - A non-functioning refrigerator
  - If included in the lease, a non-functioning air conditioner
  - If included in the lease, no functioning elevator
  - Any conditions, services, or facilities that pose a serious and negative impact on health or safety
  - Other essential services or facilities



# Non-Emergency Repairs (Minn. Stat. § 504B.385)

- All other repairs must be completed within 14 days written notice
- Rent escrow actions
  - You can do it! (but HOME Line and SLS can help)
  - Be sure to follow the court packet on Judicial Branch website and list:
    - Your name and address
    - Landlord's name and address
    - Description of repair issues
    - Dates of notice to landlord
    - Whether you've contacted an inspector
    - Amount of rent you will deposit





Questions?