

Tips for students seeking to rent an Apartment:

- Never sign a lease without viewing the apartment first. Make sure that you do a thorough inspection of the apartment you intend to live in.
- Make an appointment with Student Legal Services to have your lease reviewed *before* you sign it.
- A lease is a valid contract. Your signature on the lease binds you to the terms of the lease. Make sure that you read the lease thoroughly before signing it.
- Always get your lease in writing and keep a file with all your rental information. Always keep all correspondence from your landlord in a file.
- **Choose your roommates wisely!** You never know people until you live with them. Almost all leases make the tenants “jointly and severally liable.” This means that each tenant is responsible for everything. For example, if one tenant decides to move out, the other tenants are still responsible for the full rent.
- Take pictures when you move in and out of an apartment unit. Make a note of any flaws (hole, crack, stain) that you notice before moving in. Taking pictures will prevent you from any liability when moving out of the apartment. The landlord may try and deduct some money from your security deposit. Taking pictures will prevent you from being charged unnecessarily.
- **NEVER** pay cash: use checks, money orders, and online payment for tracking.
- **NEVER** stop paying your rent! Always put your complaint about your unit in writing and give the landlord two weeks (14 days) to remedy the problem.
- Communicate clearly with your Landlord. Report all maintenance problems to the landlord as soon as possible. Little problems become big problems when they are left to fester.
- Your landlord cannot evict you or lock you out of your apartment without an Order from the Court. Contact the local police if this happens.
- Download and review the Chicago Renter’s Right Guide for further information, Click here: <http://lcbh.org/resource-guide>

Contact UIC Student Legal Services if you need assistance at (312) 996-9214