



## **What Every Landlord Should Know. . .**

### ***Rental Applications:***

Every landlord should request a rental application from a potential tenant. An application fee may be something to consider to defray any credit check\* costs or to better ensure the seriousness of the applicant.

Rental applications should include the following information:

- Applicant's and any other co-tenant's names;
- Date(s) of birth;
- Employment and income verification;
- Bank account information;
- Applicant's Social Security number(s); and
- Previous place(s) of residence.

In addition, be sure to ask the following:

- Have you ever been arrested for a felony?
- Have you ever been convicted of drug-related crime?
- Have you ever been filed upon for eviction?
- Have you ever been convicted of a DUI or disorderly conduct?

Every application should include a place for the applicant to sign which states that misrepresentation of information provides legal grounds for an eviction action or refusal for a tenancy.

\*NOTE: You must notify the applicant in writing if you refuse the tenancy because of a negative credit report. You must include in the notification the name and address of the credit agency used to obtain the report.

### ***Background Checks:***

BE SURE TO VERIFY ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM ALL ADULT PARTIES INVOLVED, INCLUDING SPOUSES.

### ***Felony Checks:***

YOU NEED:                      Applicant's name & date of birth.

WHERE TO GO:                <http://cpdocket.cp.cuyahogacounty.us/>

Or to the Justice Center, 1200 Ontario - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, "County Clerk of Courts" CRIMINAL RECORDS.

For arrest records in City of Cleveland, go to "Warrant Unit Check" on 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.

### ***Prior Evictions and Criminal Misdemeanors (City of University Heights):***

YOU NEED:                      Full name & previous address

WHERE TO GO: <http://www.shakerheightscourt.org/> Click on the Case Information tab. You would then click on the Civil Case tab to check evictions, or the Traffic/Criminal Case tab to search misdemeanors. In the Advanced Case Search area, you can search by name. If you find a case with your tenant's name, you can use the case number to cross-reference and ask the Shaker Heights Clerk of Courts to view the file and see what happened in the case.

### ***Helpful Hints:***

- ALWAYS DO PRIOR EVICTION AND CONVICTION CHECKS!
- Always have potential tenant(s) fill out a rental application.
- Ask for the applicant's driver's license or state I.D. and verify that the information on the application matches.
- Visit applicant, perhaps unannounced, at current residence.
- Use canceled checks and utility bills for proof of payment history. Credit checks can be unreliable, costly and not necessarily the best indicator of the applicant's ability to pay household expenses.
- Do not take the word of the last landlord. A landlord may say anything to get rid of a bad tenant.
- Consider an anti-drug clause if you have a written lease.
- Consider the number of people that will occupy the unit in any written lease.
- Consider common area restrictions and animal restrictions.
- Keep your standards the same when evaluating applicants. For example, you may require that a tenant make at least a certain income in order to ensure rent payment.
- You can evict a person without cause with a 30-day notice on a month-to-month oral or written agreement.
- The Ohio Landlord-Tenant Law, regardless of a written lease or clauses contrary to the Ohio law protects ALL TENANCIES.

### ***Important Things to Know:***

- Landlord is always responsible to keep the water service on to his/her residential property.
- Landlord is always responsible for the maintenance of structure, his/her appliances and cleanliness of all common areas.
- Landlord is always responsible for electrical or gas service payments when there is one meter servicing more than one unit.
- Landlord is responsible for pest/bug control when there is more than one unit.
- Tenant is obligated to maintain his/her unit in a clean, safe and sanitary manner.
- Tenant is obligated to comply with all local, state and federal ordinances (laws).

**This document is provided by the University Heights Housing Department for informational purposes only. It should not be taken or used as legal advice. Each circumstance and case is unique; following the information contained herein does not guarantee a favorable outcome. If you have questions about your particular situation or would like guidance on how you should proceed, you should speak with an attorney.**