

Be a Good Neighbor & Tenant

Tips for being a good neighbor and maintaining your reputation as a good renter.



Benefits of being a good neighbor and tenant include:

having good rental references to qualify for safe and healthy housing; peace of mind from having a “Happy Landlord” who values keeping you as a tenant; feelings of security, belonging and community from being connected to your neighbors.

Clean and Healthy

- If garbage pickup service is not part of your lease, get service when you start other utilities. Containers on wheels with attached lids are easy to move around and keep garbage inside.
- Keep your rental clean and sanitary to avoid infestation by insects or rodents.
- Place garbage in trash cans – leaving it lying around inside or outside attracts pests.
- Find out what day garbage is picked up by your hauler. On pickup day, put garbage inside the pickup container and move it to a place the hauler can collect it.
- Securely cover garbage so dogs and wildlife can’t get into it and scatter garbage. Garbage in plastic bags or loose on the ground is easily scattered by wind and animals.
- If garbage gets scattered, pick it up and put it in the container.
- Take pickup containers in after pickup to improve the look of your neighborhood.
- If you have more garbage than containers, ask your hauler for more.
- If recycling is provided by your landlord or as part of your garbage service, you can reduce the amount of garbage by recycling bottles, cans, plastic and clean paper. Some haulers have single-stream recycling so you don’t have to sort it yourself – a real time-saver.
- Schedule pickup of solid waste (old furniture, mattresses, box springs, toys, yard or other equipment) with Habitat for Humanity, 217.523.2710. When you know the pickup date, put it at the curb (not the alley) the day before. Your landlord can be fined for solid waste in the yard, on the curb or in the alley, and that can reflect on you or affect you as a tenant.
- Electronics can be taken to BLH, 1832 Stevenson, 62703, for free by Springfield residents.
- Hazardous waste drop-offs are done with a voucher process about once a year. Dates vary - check the city website. Join neighbors to collect waste and drop it off for several homes.

Yards, Streets, Public Spaces

- If mowing the yard is your responsibility according to your lease, keep it mowed regularly. The City can fine for grass more than 10” tall. Mowing responsibility includes alley and the area between sidewalk and street; some properties are responsible for mowing boulevards.
- Park only on the street, in driveways or parking lots. Parking in the grass, on lawns or across sidewalks can result in fines.
- Cars that don’t run can make a neighborhood look cluttered or run down. Disposing of them improves the appeal of the neighborhood – options include selling, donating or calling a junk car removal service that may pay you a small amount.
- Pick up toys, yard furniture and tools from the yard to keep it looking tidy.
- Dump water out of containers and planters to prevent mosquitos from breeding.
- Leaves and yard waste are picked up for no extra charge March-November. Put bags near the curb close to the pickup date. Garbage cans (label “yard waste”) and paper bags intended for leaves are accepted – leaves in regular plastic garbage bags are not.
- Limbs are picked up at specific times of the year only - check the city website to learn more.
- Pick up your dog feces regularly to control odors and mess and to avoid health hazards – both in your own yard and when your dog relives itself in the yards of others.

- Shovel snow off sidewalks and spread sand or salt to melt ice to prevent falls.
- Your landlord is responsible for keeping the exterior of the dwelling in good condition, including cleaning gutters, maintaining the roof and siding, repairing broken windows and stairs and railings. Report problems to your landlord right away so problems can be fixed to avoid negative attention and fines.

Noise Nuisances

- Take your dog in if it habitually barks more than 10 minutes at a time. Excessive barking can be reported as a nuisance.
- Be aware of your volume – loud music can bother neighbors and result in police visits.
- End parties at a reasonable hour. Let your neighbors know in advance if there will be a gathering with more traffic and noise than usual. Perhaps you could even invite them!

Keep it Dry

- Your landlord is responsible for maintaining the roof and gutters in good condition to prevent water from entering the house. Be sure to report leaks to your landlord right away to help prevent water damage.
- Keep downspouts and diverters in place so water is directed away from basement walls to reduce the possibility of water in the basement.
- If water does get into the basement or into rooms, dry it out by vacuuming or mopping up water and using fans to dry the surfaces and prevent mold that can cause illnesses.
- If sewage backs into the basement, be sure to disinfect possessions and surfaces with bleach to prevent the spread of disease. If this happens regularly, report it to your landlord.

Health Hazards

- Report peeling paint to your landlord; lead paint can cause permanent damage to children!
- Report faulty heating and cooling to your landlord. Carbon monoxide can kill!
- Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors least twice a year to be sure they work.
- Keep bugs from making you sick: store food in bug-proof containers to avoid roaches; control fleas on pets to avoid infestations; be aware of bedbug signs, and take care when bringing recycled furniture into your home. Report problems to your landlord right away.

Neighborliness

- Get to know your neighbors. Exchange contact information so you can share information and look out for each other. Let them know about problems or issues that may have occurred while they were away. Watch their homes and, if asked, take in their mail or paper when they are out of town.
- Support your neighbors: do you have an elderly neighbor, a sick neighbor, or a neighbor with a new baby who could use some help? Consider helping out by cutting their lawn, scooping their walk or asking them what else they may need.

Growing Community - Extra Credit

- Report street lights that are not working. There is a number on the light poles that you can provide when you call CWLP at 217.789-2121.
- Clear street drains near your home to keep storm water flowing and reduce flooding.
- Blowing or raking yard waste into the street clogs sewer grates and contributes to flooding.
- Pick up trash along sidewalks and streets – it's amazing how much better a clean street looks.
- Start a neighborhood watch or neighborhood association.