



OpenDoors

Winter is on the way.....



Winter will soon be here and both landlords and tenants want to be clear about the rules for heating rental units and what the regulations say about what the temperature must be.

Here is some basic information for landlords and tenants:

Landlords must make sure that the temperature in all rental units meets the provincial standards. There is no set date to turn on the heat, but the temperature in a building or unit must stay:

- at or above 18.3°C (65°F) between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- at or above 21°C (70°F) between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m.

If a heating system isn't working in a unit or complex during the cold months, the Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) sees it as an emergency. Landlords should do regular maintenance and service on all heating systems to prevent a break down in cold weather.

If the furnace is in a rental unit, landlords can ask the tenant to replace the furnace filter. If this is something the landlord expects, he or she should tell the tenant what type of filter is needed and how often it needs to be changed.

Tenants who have fireplaces in their units are responsible for cleaning the fireplace, floors and wall vents.

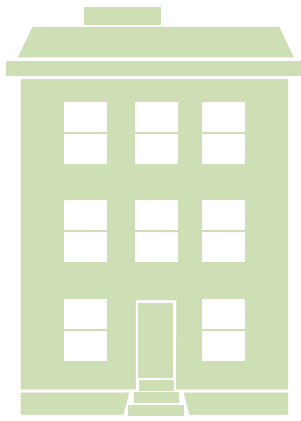
For questions on the standards for heating, call 311 in Winnipeg. If you live outside of Winnipeg, you can go to: gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/protection/contact.html.

This site lists the Public Health Inspector offices throughout Manitoba. Or, you can call toll free 1-855-236-1566 and ask for the telephone number for the public health inspector in your area.

Attention tenants

Sometimes, when a landlord can't find a tenant after a tenancy has ended, the Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) receives money that is owed to the tenant by the landlord. If you have forgotten to collect your deposit(s) or may have overpaid rent, please check out our website at manitoba.ca/rtb. Go to Tenants, Unclaimed Deposit/Other to see addresses where the branch has money owing to a tenant. If you see an address you lived at, call the branch for more information or fill out the Tenant's Application Form and bring it or send it to the RTB.

Fire in a multi-level residential complex



If you live in a multi-level residential complex and a fire happens, should you stay in your unit and wait for help or get out right away? When the fire alarm sounds in your building, how do you know if it is safer to leave your unit or stay?

Some signs that it may be better to **stay in your unit** include:

- The door to the hallway is hot to touch.
- The hallway is full of smoke or flames.
- The stairwell is full of smoke or flames.

If it is safer to stay in your unit, close the door and stuff wet towels at the base of the door. Turn off all appliances in the unit and go to a room with a window. Take your cell phone with you if you have one.

Call 911 and tell them how many of you are in the unit and where you are. Hang a sheet out of the window to let firefighters know where you are. Close the door to the room and stuff wet towels around any vents and the bottom of the door. Stay as low as possible in the room.

Some signs that it is **safe to leave your unit** and get out of the building include:

- The door to the hallway is cool to the touch.
- The hallway is clear of smoke and there are no signs of flames.
- The stairwell is clear of smoke and there are no signs of flames.

If it is safe to leave your unit, stay low and go to the nearest exit. Once you are out of the building, go to the meeting place you have set up with your family.

If the fire starts in your unit

If a fire starts in your apartment, get everyone out, close the door and pull the nearest smoke alarm. Once you are safely out of the building, call 911 to report the fire. Never go back into a burning building.

Be prepared

Talk to your landlord or caretaker to see if there is a fire safety plan in place for your building or complex. Make sure you and your family know where all the exits are and never ignore a fire alarm.

Landlord and tenant responsibilities regarding infestations

No one wants to find a pest infestation in their rental unit. Infestations can include, but are not limited to, pests like cockroaches or bed bugs, and rodents like mice or rats. Knowing your responsibilities regarding pests and acting quickly to get rid of them will help stop them from spreading.

Landlords are responsible to look into complaints of infestations in their rental units. If there is evidence of any kind of pests, landlords must use commonly accepted methods to get rid of them (for example, spraying for insects, setting traps for mice). Landlords should be sure to give tenants enough time to do any pre-treatment work that is needed, and must remember to give tenants written notice of no less than 24 hours that they will be entering the unit to complete the treatment.

Tenants are responsible to make sure they keep their rental units reasonably clean and free from clutter to prevent an infestation. Tenants must let their landlord know about any infestation in their unit, so the landlord can treat the unit before the pests spread to other units. Tenants must follow the landlord's or exterminator's instructions on how to prepare for the extermination, so the treatment will be as successful as possible. This can include emptying kitchen cupboards, moving furniture away from walls, washing and bagging up all linens and clothing, etc.

Note: Sometimes tenants aren't able to do the pre-treatment work required by the landlord or exterminator (e.g., elderly tenants or tenants with special needs). Landlords should work with tenants to make sure they have the support they need to prepare properly.

Landlords are responsible for the costs of infestation control. However, if a landlord feels that a tenant has caused them extra costs (e.g., not letting an exterminator into their unit after receiving proper notice or not preparing for treatment), the landlord can file a claim with the Residential Tenancies Branch. If the landlord can prove that a tenant caused an infestation (e.g., they brought in a mattress infected with bed bugs), the landlord may file a claim for the entire cost of treatment. The branch will hold a hearing and hear both sides to decide on the issue.

Preventing fires in your rental unit

Having recently celebrated Fire Prevention Week in Canada, it is a reminder to think about what we can do to prevent fires in our homes, whether you rent a single family home or a unit in a high-rise residential complex. Now is a good time to go over fire safety with your children and practice your fire escape plan with the entire family. If you have caregivers who are often at your home, go over the escape plan with them as well. Remember – fire safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Here are a few tips to keep you safe.

Kitchen safety:

More fires start in the kitchen than any other room in the home. Never leave cooking food unattended. If you have to leave the room, turn the element off. Wear close-fitting clothing and make sure to keep flammable items like dish towels, oven mitts and food packaging away from elements. If you are cooking with grease, keep a lid or cookie sheet nearby in case you need to smother flames. Never try to move the pan off the element as it will be hot, and moving it may cause the flames to spread – if possible, turn the element off and wait for the pan to cool.

Landlords and caretakers are reminded that many newcomers to Canada may not be familiar with the types of appliances that are common in Canadian kitchens. If a tenant is not familiar with an appliance, make sure you go over how to operate the appliance safely.

Candles:

Candles should never be left burning unattended in a room. Many fires start in bedrooms where someone has lit a candle and fallen asleep. Make sure all candles are placed at least 12 inches away from anything flammable (curtains, bedding, clothing, furniture, etc.) and consider using flameless candles in your home.

Smoking:

Never smoke while in bed. If you have taken medication or alcohol that makes you drowsy, avoid smoking in your home. Make sure ashtrays are deep and kept clean, and that all butts are extinguished and cold before being thrown in the garbage.

Portable space heaters:

If you use a space heater to provide extra heat, remember to turn it off if you leave the room. Leave at least three feet (one meter) between the heater and anything that can burn such as furniture, clothing, bedding, etc.

Remember – never use a propane-fueled heater indoors. It will cause carbon monoxide to build up and can lead to death.

For more information on fire safety, tenants and landlords can visit firecomm.gov.mb.ca/safety_education.html.

Rent increase guideline set for 2017

Each year, the Manitoba government sets the rent increase guideline. This is the amount landlords can increase rent without applying to the Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB). As of January 1, 2017, the rent increase guideline is 1.5 per cent.

To arrive at the guideline, the government uses a method that is set out in the Residential Rent Regulation. This method is based on the percentage change in the average annual All-Items Consumer Price Index (Manitoba only), published by Statistics Canada.

Landlords who want to increase the rent by the guideline amount must give tenants written notice, at least **three months** before a rent increase takes effect. The RTB provides Notice of Rent Increase forms for landlords to use.

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Rent increase guideline set for 2017 *(continued)*

The guideline applies to most rented residential apartments, single rooms, houses and duplexes. Some units are exempt from Part 9 of the Residential Tenancies Act and do not have to follow the annual rent increase guideline. These include:

- units renting for \$1455 or more per month as of December 31, 2016
- personal care homes
- approved rehabilitated rental units
- new buildings less than 15 years old where an occupancy permit was first issued or a unit was first occupied after April 9, 2001
- new buildings less than 20 years old where an occupancy permit was first issued or a unit was first occupied after March 7, 2005

Tenants who want to object to any rent increase can send a letter to the RTB explaining why they are objecting to the increase. If tenants are objecting to an increase that is at or below the guideline, the Residential Tenancies Act sets out the following reasons for objecting:

- The landlord is not maintaining the rental unit or the building.
- The landlord has reduced or taken away a service or facility.
- The landlord is not meeting any other obligation under a tenancy agreement or the act.
- The tenant believes the landlord's costs have not increased.

The branch must receive any letter of objection no later than 60 days before the rent increase date.

For more information on rent increases, contact the branch office nearest you or visit our website.

Need information?

Winnipeg
302-254 Edmonton Street
or call 204-945-2476

Brandon
143-340 9th Street
or call 204-726-6230

Thompson
113-59 Elizabeth Drive
or call 204-677-6496
Toll free 1-800-782-8403

Online: manitoba.ca/rtb
Offline: in person or by phone
Visit your branch office
Monday to Friday
from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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