

Code of Virginia

Title 55.1. Property and Conveyances

Chapter 12. Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

Article 3. Tenant Obligations.

§ 55.1-1227. Tenant to maintain dwelling unit.

A. In addition to the provisions of the rental agreement, the tenant shall:

1. Comply with all obligations primarily imposed upon tenants by applicable provisions of building and housing codes materially affecting health and safety;
2. Keep that part of the dwelling unit and the part of the premises that he occupies and uses as clean and safe as the condition of the premises permit;
3. Keep that part of the dwelling unit and the part of the premises that he occupies free from insect and pests, as those terms are defined in § 3.2-3900, and promptly notify the landlord of the existence of any insects or pests;
4. Remove from his dwelling unit all ashes, garbage, rubbish, and other waste in a clean and safe manner and in the appropriate receptacles provided by the landlord;
5. Keep all plumbing fixtures in the dwelling unit or used by the tenant as clean as their condition permits;
6. Use in a reasonable manner all utilities and all electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, and other facilities and appliances, including an elevator in a multifamily premise, and keep all utility services paid for by the tenant to the utility service provider or its agent on at all times during the term of the rental agreement;
7. Not deliberately or negligently destroy, deface, damage, impair, or remove any part of the premises or permit any person, whether known by the tenant or not, to do so;
8. Not remove or tamper with a properly functioning smoke alarm installed by the landlord, including removing any working batteries, so as to render the alarm inoperative. The tenant shall maintain the smoke alarm in accordance with the uniform set of standards for maintenance of smoke alarms established in the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (§ 27-94 et seq.) and subdivision C 6 of § 36-105, Part III of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.);
9. Not remove or tamper with a properly functioning carbon monoxide alarm installed by the landlord, including the removal of any working batteries, so as to render the carbon monoxide alarm inoperative. The tenant shall maintain the carbon monoxide alarm in accordance with the uniform set of standards for maintenance of carbon monoxide alarms established in the Statewide Fire

Prevention Code (§ 27-94 et seq.) and subdivision C 6 of § 36-105, Part III of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.);

10. Use reasonable efforts to maintain the dwelling unit and any other part of the premises that he occupies in such a condition as to prevent accumulation of moisture and the growth of mold and promptly notify the landlord of any moisture accumulation that occurs or of any visible evidence of mold discovered by the tenant;

11. Not paint or disturb painted surfaces or make alterations in the dwelling unit without the prior written approval of the landlord, provided that (i) the dwelling unit was constructed prior to 1978 and therefore requires the landlord to provide the tenant with lead-based paint disclosures and (ii) the landlord has provided the tenant with such disclosures and the rental agreement provides that the tenant is required to obtain the landlord's prior written approval before painting, disturbing painted surfaces, or making alterations in the dwelling unit;

12. Be responsible for his conduct and the conduct of other persons, whether known by the tenant or not, who are on the premises with his consent, to ensure that his neighbors' peaceful enjoyment of the premises will not be disturbed;

13. Abide by all reasonable rules and regulations imposed by the landlord;

14. Be financially responsible for the added cost of treatment or extermination due to the tenant's unreasonable delay in reporting the existence of any insects or pests and be financially responsible for the cost of treatment or extermination due to the tenant's fault in failing to prevent infestation of any insects or pests in the area occupied; and

15. Use reasonable care to prevent any dog or other animal in possession of the tenant, authorized occupants, or guests or invitees from causing personal injuries to a third party in the dwelling unit on the premises, or property damage to the dwelling unit or the premises.

B. If the duty imposed by subdivision A 1 is greater than any duty imposed by any other subdivision of that subsection, the tenant's duty shall be determined by reference to subdivision A 1.

1974, c. 680, § 55-248.16; 1987, c. 428; 1999, c. 80; 2000, c. 760; 2003, c. 355; 2004, c. 226; 2008, cc. 489, 617, 640; 2009, c. 663; 2011, c. 766; 2014, c. 632; 2016, c. 744; 2017, cc. 262, 730; 2018, cc. 41, 81, 221; 2019, c. 712.

§ 55.1-1228. Rules and regulations.

A. A landlord, from time to time, may adopt rules or regulations, however described, concerning the tenant's use and occupancy of the dwelling unit and premises. Any such rule or regulation is enforceable against the tenant only if:

1. Its purpose is to promote the convenience, safety, or welfare of the tenants in the premises, preserve the landlord's property from abusive use, or make a fair distribution of services and facilities held out for the tenants generally;

2. It is reasonably related to the purpose for which it is adopted;

3. It applies to all tenants in the premises in a fair manner;
4. It is sufficiently explicit in its prohibition, direction, or limitation of the tenant's conduct to fairly inform him of what he is required to do or is prohibited from doing to comply;
5. It is not for the purpose of evading the obligations of the landlord; and
6. The tenant has been provided with a copy of the rules and regulations or changes to such rules and regulations at the time he enters into the rental agreement or when they are adopted.

B. A rule or regulation adopted, changed, or provided to the tenant after the tenant enters into the rental agreement shall be enforceable against the tenant if reasonable notice of its adoption or change has been given to the tenant and it does not constitute a substantial modification of his bargain. If a rule or regulation adopted or changed after the tenant enters into the rental agreement does constitute a substantial modification of his bargain, it shall not be valid unless the tenant consents to it in writing.

C. Any court enforcing this chapter shall consider violations of the reasonable rules and regulations imposed under this section as a breach of the rental agreement and grant the landlord appropriate relief.

1974, c. 680, § 55-248.17; 2000, c. [760](#); 2017, c. [730](#); 2019, c. [712](#).

§ 55.1-1229. Access; consent; correction of nonemergency conditions; relocation of tenant; security systems.

A. 1. The tenant shall not unreasonably withhold consent to the landlord to enter into the dwelling unit in order to inspect the premises; make necessary or agreed-upon repairs, decorations, alterations, or improvements; supply necessary or agreed-upon services; or exhibit the dwelling unit to prospective or actual purchasers, mortgagees, tenants, workmen, or contractors.

2. If, upon inspection of a dwelling unit during the term of a tenancy, the landlord determines there is a violation by the tenant of § [55.1-1227](#) or the rental agreement materially affecting health and safety that can be remedied by repair, replacement of a damaged item, or cleaning in accordance with § [55.1-1248](#), the landlord may make such repairs and send the tenant an invoice for payment. If, upon inspection of the dwelling unit during the term of a tenancy, the landlord discovers a violation of the rental agreement, this chapter, or other applicable law, the landlord may send a written notice of termination pursuant to § [55.1-1245](#).

3. If the rental agreement so provides and if a tenant without reasonable justification declines to permit the landlord or managing agent to exhibit the dwelling unit for sale or lease, the landlord may recover damages, costs, and reasonable attorney fees against such tenant.

As used in this subdivision, "reasonable justification" includes the tenant's reasonable concern for his own health, or the health of any authorized occupant, during a state of emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to § [44-146.17](#) in response to a communicable disease of public health threat as defined in § [44-146.16](#), provided that the tenant has provided written notice to the landlord informing the landlord of such concern. In such circumstances, the tenant shall provide to the

landlord or managing agent a video tour of the dwelling unit or other acceptable substitute for exhibiting the dwelling unit for sale or lease.

4. The landlord may enter the dwelling unit without consent of the tenant in case of emergency. The landlord shall not abuse the right of access or use it to harass the tenant. Except in case of emergency or if it is impractical to do so, the landlord shall give the tenant notice of his intent to enter and may enter only at reasonable times. Unless impractical to do so, the landlord shall give the tenant at least 72 hours' notice of routine maintenance to be performed that has not been requested by the tenant. Such routine maintenance shall be performed within 14 days of delivery of the notice to the tenant and the notice shall state the last date on which the maintenance may possibly be performed. If the tenant makes a request for maintenance, the landlord is not required to provide notice to the tenant. Notwithstanding the foregoing, during a state of emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to § 44-146.17 in response to a communicable disease of public health threat as defined in § 44-146.16, the tenant may provide written notice to the landlord requesting that one or more nonemergency property conditions in the dwelling unit not be addressed in the normal course of business of the landlord due to such communicable disease of public health threat. In such case, the tenant shall be deemed to have waived any and all claims and rights under this chapter against the landlord for failure to address such nonemergency property conditions. At any time thereafter, the tenant may consent in writing to the landlord addressing such nonemergency property conditions in the normal course of business of the landlord. In the case of a tenant who has provided notice that he does not want nonemergency repairs made during the state of emergency due to a communicable disease of public health threat, the landlord may nonetheless enter the dwelling unit to do nonemergency repairs and maintenance with at least seven days' written notice to the tenant and at a time consented to by the tenant, no more than once every six months, provided that the employees and agents sent by the landlord are wearing all appropriate and reasonable personal protective equipment as required by state law. Furthermore, if the landlord is required to conduct maintenance or an inspection pursuant to the agreement for the loan or insurance policy that covers the dwelling unit, the tenant shall allow such maintenance or inspection, provided that the employees and agents sent by the landlord are wearing all appropriate personal protective equipment as required by state law.

5. During the pendency of an unlawful detainer filed by the landlord against the tenant, the landlord may request the court to enter an order requiring the tenant to provide the landlord with access to such dwelling unit.

B. Upon the sole determination by the landlord of the existence of a nonemergency property condition in the dwelling unit that requires the tenant to temporarily vacate the dwelling unit in order for the landlord to properly remedy such property condition, the landlord may, upon at least 30 days' written notice to the tenant, require the tenant to temporarily vacate the dwelling unit for a period not to exceed 30 days to a comparable dwelling unit, or hotel, as selected by the landlord and at no expense or cost to the tenant. The landlord shall not be required to pay for any other expense of the tenant that arise after the temporary relocation period. The landlord and tenant may agree for the tenant to temporarily vacate the dwelling unit in less than 30 days. For purposes of this subsection, "nonemergency property condition" means (i) a condition in the dwelling unit that, in t

determination of the landlord, is necessary for the landlord to remedy in order for the landlord to be in compliance with § 55.1-1220; (ii) the condition does not need to be remedied within a 24-hour period, with any condition that needs to be remedied within 24 hours being defined as an "emergency condition"; and (iii) the condition can only be effectively remedied by the temporary relocation of the tenant pursuant to the provisions of this subsection.

The tenant shall continue to be responsible for payment of rent under the rental agreement during the period of any temporary relocation. The landlord shall pay all costs of repairs or remediation required to address the nonemergency property condition. Refusal of the tenant to cooperate with temporary relocation pursuant to this subsection shall be deemed a breach of the rental agreement unless the tenant agrees to vacate the unit and terminate the rental agreement within the 30-day notice period. If the landlord properly remedies the nonemergency property condition within the 3 day period, nothing in this section shall be construed to entitle the tenant to terminate the rental agreement. Further, nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the landlord from taking legal action against the tenant for any noncompliance that occurs during the period of any temporary relocation pursuant to this subsection. During the pendency of an unlawful detainer filed by the landlord against the tenant, the landlord may request the court to enter an order requiring the tenant to provide the landlord with access to such dwelling unit.

C. The landlord has no other right to access except by court order or that permitted by §§ 55.1-1248 and 55.1-1249 or if the tenant has abandoned or surrendered the premises.

D. The tenant may install within the dwelling unit new security systems that the tenant may believe necessary to ensure his safety, including chain latch devices approved by the landlord and fire detection devices, provided that:

1. Installation does no permanent damage to any part of the dwelling unit;
2. A duplicate of all keys and instructions for the operation of all devices are given to the landlord; and
3. Upon termination of the tenancy, the tenant is responsible for payment to the landlord for reasonable costs incurred for the removal of all such devices and repairs to all damaged areas.

E. Upon written request of a tenant in a dwelling unit, the landlord shall install a carbon monoxide alarm in the tenant's dwelling unit within 90 days. The landlord may charge the tenant a reasonable fee to recover the costs of the equipment and labor for such installation. The landlord's installation of a carbon monoxide alarm shall be in compliance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.).

1974, c. 680, § 55-248.18; 1993, c. 634; 1995, c. 601; 1999, c. 65; 2000, c. 760; 2001, c. 524; 2004, c. 307; 2008, cc. 489, 617; 2009, c. 663; 2011, c. 766; 2014, c. 632; 2015, c. 596; 2016, c. 744; 2017, c. 73; 2018, cc. 41, 81; 2019, c. 712; 2021, Sp. Sess. I, c. 409; 2024, c. 46.

§ 55.1-1230. Access following entry of certain court orders.

A. A tenant or authorized occupant who has obtained an order from a court pursuant to § 16.1-279, or subsection B of § 20-103 granting such tenant possession of the premises to the exclusion of one

or more co-tenants or authorized occupants may provide the landlord with a copy of that court order and request that the landlord either (i) install a new lock or other security devices on the exterior doors of the dwelling unit at the landlord's actual cost or (ii) permit the tenant or authorized occupant to do so, provided that:

1. Installation of the new lock or security devices does no permanent damage to any part of the dwelling unit; and
2. A duplicate copy of all keys and instructions for the operation of all devices are given to the landlord.

Upon termination of the tenancy, the tenant shall be responsible for payment to the landlord of the reasonable costs incurred for the removal of all such devices installed and repairs to all damaged areas.

B. A person who is not a tenant or authorized occupant of the dwelling unit and who has obtained a court order from a court pursuant to § 16.1-279.1 or subsection B of § 20-103 granting such person possession of the premises to the exclusion of one or more co-tenants or authorized occupants may provide a copy of such order to the landlord and submit a rental application to become a tenant of such dwelling unit within 10 days of the entry of such order. If such person's rental application meets the landlord's tenant selection criteria, such person may become a tenant of such dwelling unit under a written rental agreement. If such person submits a rental application and does not meet the landlord's tenant selection criteria, such person shall vacate the dwelling unit no later than 30 days after the date the landlord gives such person written notice that his rental application has been rejected. If such person does not provide a copy of the protective order to the landlord and submit a rental application to the landlord within 10 days as required by this section, such person shall vacate the dwelling unit no later than 30 days after the date of the entry of such order. Such person shall be liable to the landlord for failure to vacate the dwelling unit as required in this section.

Any tenant obligated on a rental agreement shall pay the rent and otherwise comply with any and all requirements of the rental agreement and any applicable laws and regulations. The landlord may pursue all of its remedies under the rental agreement and applicable laws and regulations, including filing an unlawful detainer action pursuant to § 8.01-126 to obtain a money judgment and to evict any persons residing in such dwelling unit.

C. A landlord who has received a copy of a court order in accordance with subsection A shall not provide copies of any keys to the dwelling unit to any person excluded from the premises by such order.

D. This section shall not apply when the court order excluding a person was issued ex parte.

2005, cc. 735, 825, § 55-248.18:1; 2016, c. 595; 2019, c. 712.

§ 55.1-1231. Relocation of tenant where mold remediation needs to be performed in the dwelling unit.

Where a mold condition in the dwelling unit materially affects the health or safety of any tenant or authorized occupant, the landlord may require the tenant to temporarily vacate the dwelling unit in

order for the landlord to perform mold remediation in accordance with professional standards as defined in § 55.1-1200 for a period not to exceed 30 days. The landlord shall provide the tenant with either (i) a comparable dwelling unit, as selected by the landlord, at no expense or cost to the tenant or (ii) a hotel room, as selected by the landlord, at no expense or cost to the tenant. The landlord shall not be required to pay for any other expenses of the tenant that arise after the relocation period. The tenant shall continue to be responsible for payment of rent under the rental agreement during the period of any temporary relocation and for the remainder of the term of the rental agreement following the remediation. Nothing in this section shall be construed as entitling the tenant to a termination of a tenancy where the landlord has remediated a mold condition in accordance with professional standards as defined in § 55.1-1200. The landlord shall pay all costs of the relocation and the mold remediation, unless the mold is a result of the tenant's failure to comply with § 55.1-1227.

2008, c. 640, § 55-248.18:2; 2009, c. 663; 2011, c. 779; 2016, c. 744; 2017, c. 730; 2019, c. 712.

§ 55.1-1232. Use and occupancy by tenant.

Unless otherwise agreed, the tenant shall occupy his dwelling unit only as a residence.

1974, c. 680, § 55-248.19; 2000, c. 760; 2019, c. 712.

§ 55.1-1233. Tenant to surrender possession of dwelling unit.

At the termination of the term of tenancy, whether by expiration of the rental agreement or by reason of default by the tenant, the tenant shall promptly vacate the premises, removing all items of personal property and leaving the premises in good and clean order, reasonable wear and tear excepted. If the tenant fails to vacate, the landlord may bring an action for possession and damages including reasonable attorney fees.

1974, c. 680, § 55-248.20; 2000, c. 760; 2019, c. 712.

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