

OpenDoors

Winter is coming.....

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 meet the provincial standards. There is no set date to turn on the heat, however the temperature in a building or unit must:

- stay at or above 18.3°C (65°F) between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- stay at or above 21°C (70°F) between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

If a heating system isn't working in a unit or complex during the cold months, the branch 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.



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To cut down on the amount of paper we use, we encourage our readers to use email to get a copy of *Open Doors*.

If you would like to subscribe online, go to: **manitoba.ca/rtb** and click on the RTB Newsletter button on the right side. Then, click on the red button that takes you to the online form. Fill out the form and click on the button to submit it. Your copy of *Open Doors* will be sent straight to your email address.

You can also subscribe to the online service by phone. Call **204-945-2476** in Winnipeg; or toll free at **1-800-782-8403** to sign up.

Did you know?



A landlord **is** responsible for:

- clearing snow from the sidewalks and stairs in a multi-unit residential complex, except in areas where tenants have exclusive use of the area
- clearing snow in multi-unit complexes, when necessary, to give tenants access to their parking stalls

A landlord **is not** responsible for:

- removing snow from individual parking stalls, unless the tenant and landlord have an agreement that the landlord will provide this service

Fee Changes

Effective October 1, 2013, some of the fees the Residential Tenancies Branch charges for services increased. The fees are now:

Application for substitutional service:

\$20

Claims for compensation:

\$30

Appeal of claims for compensation:

\$30

Application for whole building rehabilitation scheme:

\$700 plus \$5 per unit, to a maximum of \$1,200

In some cases, landlords and tenants who meet the guidelines don't have to pay filing fees. To find out more, call the branch information line at 204-945-2476 in Winnipeg; or toll free at 1-800-782-8403.

Changes Coming to The Residential Tenancies Act – Bill 40

The Manitoba Legislature has approved some amendments to the act. The changes will come into effect soon. Until then, the current act remains in force. Some of the coming changes include:

- Landlords who allow pets in their buildings will be able to collect a full month's rent as a pet damage deposit. Tenants who have already paid a pet damage deposit will not have to pay more.
- Landlords will be able to end tenancies if a tenant engages in unlawful activity that:
 - Affects the security, safety, health, or well-being of others in the complex,
 - Interferes with the enjoyment of a rental unit or complex or
 - Causes damage to a rental unit or the complex

The branch will be able to issue an order of possession for unlawful activity even if the tenant has not been convicted of an offense.

- If a person doesn't participate in a hearing at the branch that results in an order of possession for non-payment of rent, that person may only appeal the order if they receive leave to appeal (permission to appeal). Leave to appeal may only be granted if the person can show that:

– He/she was not reasonably able to come to the hearing.

– The order was based on false or misleading information.

- If landlords carry out renovations in a way that is unreasonable and maximizes inconvenience to a tenant and this causes the tenant to move out, it may be seen as the landlord terminating the tenancy. If this happens, the landlord may be required to pay all of the following:

– the tenant's moving costs up to the prescribed amount

– the greater of one month's rent and any increase in rent the tenant has to pay (for up to 12 months)

– the greater of one month's tenant services charge (if any) and any increase in the tenant services charge the tenant has to pay (for up to 12 months)

- New regulations that set out the way of determining the rent increase guideline

These changes are not in effect yet. Please check our website regularly for more information.

Prevent Kitchen Fires

More fires start in the kitchen than any other room in a home. Most kitchen fires are started by cooking equipment. You can prevent most kitchen fires by following these safety tips.

Never leave the kitchen when cooking

When you are cooking (especially with grease), stay in the kitchen. If you need to leave or get busy doing something else, turn off the element.

Turn off the elements

When you have finished cooking, turn off the elements. Don't leave pots and pans on elements when you are done with them. It's too easy to accidentally turn on the wrong element.

Keep flammable items away from the stove

Keep dishtowels and potholders, plastic utensils and containers away from elements. Don't wear loose or flowing clothes when cooking (ex: loose sleeves, baggy tops, ties) and tie long hair back over your shoulders.

Turn pot handles inward

Get into the habit of turning pot handles in, toward the back of the stove. You won't knock them and children won't be able to grab them.

Keep appliances clean and repaired

Keep your toaster free from crumbs. Clean up spills and grease so that they can't catch fire. Keep your oven and elements clean. Fix or replace frayed or loose electrical cords.

If an appliance doesn't seem to be working properly, unplug it and have someone knowledgeable check it (ex: landlord or caretaker).

Unplug appliances when you are not using them (ex: electric frying pans, kettles, toasters).

Have a working smoke alarm

In a rental unit, a landlord must provide a working smoke alarm. If you notice that your smoke alarm is not working, let your landlord know right away. Not having a working alarm puts both your family and other families in the building in danger. It's best to test your smoke alarm every month.

What can you do if a kitchen fire starts?

Put a lid on it

To put out a grease fire, use a potholder or oven mitts and slide a lid over the pot to cover the flames if you can and then turn the element off. If the flames don't go out right away, leave your home, call the fire department, and, if you are in a building with other tenants, pull the fire alarm to alert them.



In the oven/microwave oven

- If a fire starts in your oven, close the oven door and turn off the heat source
- For a microwave fire, keep the door closed and turn off the microwave

If the fire doesn't go out right away, leave your home, call the fire department, and pull the fire alarm to alert others.

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Remember

- If your clothing catches fire – stop where you are, drop to the ground and roll back and forth to put the fire out.
- Keep matches and other fire starters out of reach of children. Explain to your children the dangers of fire.
- Teach children what they should do in case of a fire and practice your escape route with them.
- If you can't stop a fire right away, get out with your family right away. Fires can get out of control quickly.
- If you or someone you live with has a disability, speak to your landlord about the fire evacuation procedures and any devices that may assist you in getting out quickly.
- Call 911 or the appropriate emergency number in your area right away.

Newcomers to Canada

For some newcomers to Canada, the standard kitchen in most rental units may look very different from what you had in your last home. Knowing how to use the appliances in your new kitchen safely and knowing what to do in case of a fire can save your life and the life of your family.

Ask your landlord or caretaker to show you how to safely use any appliance you are not familiar with.

New Journey Housing in Winnipeg is a resource centre for newcomers. They offer workshops to newcomers that cover many important rental topics including fire safety and prevention. For more information on this program, visit their website at newjourneyhousing.com/index.php. You can call them at 204-942-2238.

Need information?

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

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

Thompson at
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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