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The Residential Tenancies Branch

FACT SHEET

Tenants' Abandoned Property

Tenants must take their belongings with them when they move out of a rental unit, unless they make special storage arrangements with the landlord. Unfortunately, tenants sometimes leave things behind and landlords must decide what to do with them.

To protect themselves, landlords must follow the requirements in *The Residential Tenancies Act* to dispose of abandoned property.

If a landlord decides the items left behind have monetary value, they must complete a form called Inventory of Tenant's Abandoned Property and send it to the Branch and the tenant. The Branch provides the form. The landlord must store the items for 60 days. After that time, the Branch will authorize the landlord to sell the items, usually by public auction. If the tenant owes the landlord money under a Branch Order, the landlord can put the sale proceeds towards that Order. If the landlord does not have an Order or the tenant does not owe the landlord any money, the landlord must send the sale proceeds to the Branch. The Branch holds the money for the tenant for two years. After two years, the money is transferred to a fund the Branch uses to provide education material for landlords and tenants.

Note: A landlord does not have to comply with these requirements before disposing of property that is of limited value (not worth the cost of removal, storage and sale). Landlords may give these items to a charitable or other non-profit organization, or dispose of them.

If a landlord believes the items have no monetary value, or are unsanitary or unsafe to store, the landlord may dispose of them, without authorization from the Branch, with one exception. If a tenant leaves personal papers or photographs, the landlord must hold them for 60 days before disposing of them. The landlord must also complete the inventory form and send it to the Branch and the tenant.

This fact sheet is only a brief explanation. For more information on abandoned property, contact the Residential Tenancies Branch.

This information is available in multiple formats upon request.

Cette information existe également en français.
Composez le 204-945-2476.