

# Be the Perfect Tenant

You want and need to be the best renter the new landlord has ever seen. No landlord really wants you, but they need you. They need you to help them pay their rental mortgage; they need you to help them pay their personal mortgage, they need you to help them retire early. But they do not need you to come around and damage the premise or cause them a lot of extra work. Here is how to be the best renter you can possibly be.

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## Prepare for the Apartment Viewing Process

When you set up a showing for a rental property, it is really an interview. You are interviewing the landlord or property management company, and they are interviewing you. Make a critical mistake in this process, and you will have to move on to the next property.

## Control Your Viewing Group

Bring everyone along who will be renting — and no one else. A landlord will assume that your friend who arrives with you and is “living somewhere else” will be moving in as soon as you sign a lease. If you have kids, do not let them run wild in the rental. It is not your place yet. If you are viewing an occupied unit, remember that it is someone else’s house. The current tenants do not even want you there, but they know the landlord needs to show it.

## Learn Move-In Etiquette

Once you have been approved, plan on moving in during the **day**. You can start as early as 7 a.m. during the week — or even 8 a.m. on the weekends — but do not start moving in after 8 p.m. Wait until the next day. Do not block the other tenants’ cars with all of your mover’s cars. If you have to temporarily block driveways and garages, be prepared to quickly move out of the way in short notice. Other tenants need to go about their day and do not want to be inconvenienced by you.

Watch for the walls and ceilings when you move. Do not scrape the walls and break ceiling light fixtures. If you drop trash in the hallways or common areas, pick it up. If you see a neighbor, introduce yourself if they do not do so first. Your neighbor is your ally. They are the ones who will tolerate your noise — or call the cops on you. It’s your choice: be a neighborly neighbor or be the “strange person across the hall.” A simple handshake is all it takes.

**Pay Rent.** It is impossible to be a great renter if you do not pay rent. You could be a personal friend of Gandhi or a guest of the Pope on a regular basis, but if you do not pay rent, you are a terrible renter by definition. If you need to pay rent in two installments, pay half in advance, and the rest when it is due. PAY YOUR RENT ONTIME! Aim to pay it by the first of each month.

**Do Not Bring in Pests.** Stay away from the free furniture on the curbs. It is there for a reason; no one wants it. It is likely to be full of bedbugs.

**Maintenance Request.** Do not call the landlord a million times for a leaky faucet. However, you should contact him/her over the phone to let him/her know about the issue and ask for an expected fixed date. Then put the request in writing and submit over to the landlord whether it's a written letter or email. Keep copies! This allows for you to compile a log of requests with the date and proof of notice. **DO NOT STOP PAYING YOUR RENT IF SOMETHING ISN'T FIXED, YOU CAN STILL BE EVICTED FOR NON-PAYMENT of RENT.**

Most importantly, most landlords are not able to get into the unit because the tenant isn't there to open the door. Make arrangements with your landlord to provide him/her access.

**Do Not Just Hang Around.** Do not loiter around the outside of the building or allow your friends to do so. When you come home or your friends come over, go into your apartment. Hanging around looks bad — it looks like you are looking for trouble to get into. And especially do not hang around the building or parking lot around after dark. Hanging around and drinking is even worse; do not drink outside your apartment. If you are grilling alone, a beer to pass the time might be OK.

**Disclose Your Extra Guests.** Do not expect that because you have paid the rent, you can have extra people living there. There is a reason why tenants get screened; one reason is to make sure you will likely pay the rent. The other reason is to screen out potential troublemakers. If you want a guest, get them approved by the landlord. Maybe there will be slight increase in rent, maybe not. And extra guests also include extra pets.

**Be Quiet After 9 p.m.** Most tenants work a typical day job. They expect it to be quiet when they go to bed or start to get ready for bed. You share walls, ceilings and floors. Your music and sound effects become their noise. If you already met the neighbors, they might come over and help you realize you are making too much noise. If not, they may just call the cops.

**After the Move-In.** Remember that the hurdle you had to overcome to move in, your neighbors also have experienced. The reason why your rental is nice is directly related to that tenant screening hurdle. You should want to keep it nice and get a great landlord reference.

Your home is your castle, but it is not going to be yours forever. Give proper notice to move out. Keep it clean and mostly presentable. Clean up after your pets and control your guests.

**Most importantly, enjoy the time you are there!**

If you have questions on Connecticut's Tenant/Landlord Laws seek legal guidance and/or read through the "[Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants in Connecticut](#)" from the CT judicial site, located at: <https://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm031.pdf>