

Cook County Residential Tenant Landlord Ordinance

Renters Rights and Landlord Protections



What are renters rights under the Ordinance?

Renters have the right to a habitable unit. Landlords must maintain a habitable and safe home that includes:

- ▶ **Essential services:** heat, running water, hot water, electricity, gas, or plumbing that the rental agreement requires the landlord to provide, and internet access if the rental agreement requires the landlord to provide it.
- ▶ **Property maintained** in compliance with the relevant local building codes.
- ▶ **Adequate heat:** From September 15 through June 1 of each year inside temperature is at least 68 degrees from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., and at least 66 degrees from 10:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.
- ▶ **A home free from bedbugs:** After notification, the landlord must provide pest control services within 10 days, and must maintain written records of pest control measures for 3 years.
- ▶ **Repairs made by a landlord in a timely manner:** The RTLO requires landlords to make repairs within 14 days — after that, tenants may fix minor issues themselves and deduct the expenses from their monthly rent.
 - ▶ Unless there is an emergency, tenants are entitled to two days' advance written notice before the landlord enters the unit.
 - ▶ The RTLO sets forth procedures tenants may follow to force landlords to make necessary repairs. Tenants should consult with an attorney to make sure they follow these procedures properly.

What are landlord protections under the RTLO?

- ▶ Landlords have a two-business day right to cure administrative errors, such as failing to attach the ordinance summary, disclose authorized entrants and ownership transfer, or disclose the name of the bank where a security deposit is held.
- ▶ Landlords have a 14-day right to cure issues of material noncompliance with the rental agreement, except for essential services.
- ▶ The ordinance protects landlords against property destruction and provides clear rules on when and how landlords may exercise their right to dispose of abandoned property.
- ▶ Landlords have 30 days to decide whether to withhold from a security deposit unpaid rent that was not validly withheld, court costs awarded to the landlord, and/or the cost of repairing damage the tenant caused.
- ▶ Landlords are given an opportunity to rebut a presumption that they have retaliated against their tenants.
- ▶ Landlords may enter a residence without notice to make emergency repairs.
- ▶ Tenants are obligated to report bed bugs to reduce risk of exposure to adjacent units.
- ▶ Landlords may adopt specific rules and regulations for the health and safety of residents as long as these rules do not conflict with RTLO provisions.

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The Cook County Residential
Tenant Landlord Ordinance
goes into effect June 1, 2021.

Who is covered by the Ordinance?

- ▶ Almost all rental units in suburban Cook County are included (including mobile homes and subsidized units). Chicago, Evanston, and Mount Prospect have their own tenant/landlord ordinances and are exempt from the RTLO.
- ▶ All rental units are subject to the anti-lockout provisions, effective January 25, 2021.
- ▶ If the residency is in an exempted unit, the landlord must notify a prospective tenant whether they are excluded from the RTLO before accepting any fees.
- ▶ To find a full list of exempted units and who is covered by the RTLO, visit www.cookcountyil.gov/RTLO to read the FAQ and find a link to the full ordinance on Legistar.



Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County
Board President

Cook County Residential Tenant Landlord Ordinance

Find an online FAQ, summary,
the full RTLO, and more legal
resources on our website:

www.cookcountyil.gov/RTLO

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