Tenants’ Rights to Privacy

WHEN YOU SIGN A LEASE OR CONTRACT, you have exclusive right to possession of the premises. The housing you’ve rented becomes personal property, subject to laws that apply to private property. Civil Code Section 1954.

Permission to Enter

After a property has been rented, no one, including the property provider, may enter without the tenant’s permission, except in circumstances that pose an immediate threat to safety, to health or to the property itself. In a non-emergency situation, the law requires that a property provider obtain permission to enter the premises at least 24 hours in advance.

Tenants are not required to grant permission, but may not unreasonably withhold permission when the property provider has a legitimate reason to be there. For example, the property provider may enter to make agreed-upon repairs, to show the property to prospective tenants or buyers, or when the tenant has abandoned the premises. Tenants can specify times of the week that are convenient for the property provider to show the unit to prospective renters.

If the property is sold, the new owner must honor any lease agreement throughout the period of the lease. This includes honoring a tenant’s right to privacy.

Privacy Violations

If a property provider fails to respect a tenant’s right to privacy, the tenant should promptly write a letter that briefly describes what happened and send it by certified mail, receipt returned, to the property provider. Repeated violations of rights to privacy, properly documented, may be considered a breach of the lease, but tenants should not try to break the lease on this basis before consulting with the Community Housing Office and AS Legal Resource Center (LRC).

Go Green

COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICE TAKES SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSERVATION VERY SERIOUSLY. We want to help renters take responsibility for their environment and reduce their impact on the environment. We unearthed many simple, effective ways for renters to live a more environmentally-friendly life, starting with their rental home.

Clean Green

You may consider cleaning with natural ingredients that can be found in your kitchen:

- Lemon juice
  - kills bacteria in kitchen and bathroom;
  - mix with vinegar or baking soda to make a cleaning solution or paste
- Baking soda
  - gets rid of smells in fridge; sprinkle on carpet before vacuuming
- Vinegar
  - cuts through grease, mildew, and stains;
  - mix with baking soda to clean toilet bowl

Additionally, grocery and retail stores now carry a wide range of effective, reasonably-priced cleaning products for the bathroom, kitchen, and laundry that are environmentally-friendly.

Green Interiors

Plants are not only decorative they also significantly help to improve the quality of indoor air because they replace carbon dioxide in the air with oxygen, all while absorbing pollutants.

When buying items for your new place, think used! See if your friends or family has any unwanted furniture or check out:

- IV Give in June at UCSB’s Embarcadero Hall
- Thrift shops, flea markets, garage sale
- craigslist.org and freecycle.org
- Facebook groups - free and for sale, Santa Barbara and Goleta swap