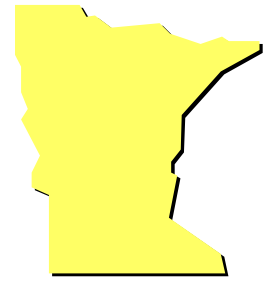
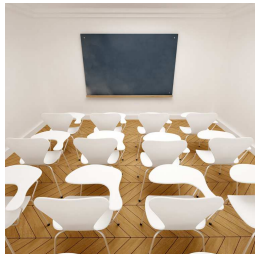


Minnesota Crime Free Multi-Housing Newsletter



Minnesota Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Landlord Training Session Scheduled



A Landlord Training Session has been scheduled for those landlords or property managers wishing to participate in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Clear your schedule for **Tuesday, March 9, 5:00-9:00 p.m.**; AND **Tuesday, March 16, 5:00-8:00 p.m.** to attend this important training session.

The class will be held at the Law Enforcement Center, 915 9th Ave. N., Moorhead.

This training is especially useful to those new to the business of being a landlord. You will learn about:

- ✓ Applicant Screening Techniques
- ✓ Effective rental agreements
- ✓ Fair Housing Laws
- ✓ Preventing crime on your property
- ✓ Eviction Process

...and much more!

There is **NO FEE** to participate in this training session.

Please registered by **February 24th** as seating is limited.

Register by mailing in the registration form below

Or

Register by calling Robin Hamre at the Moorhead Police Department at 218-299-5325

Or

Register by e-mailing your name, address, and phone number to robin.hamre@ci.moorhead.mn.us

Moorhead Police Department

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December 2009

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Yes, I want to participate in the next Landlord Training Session.

Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

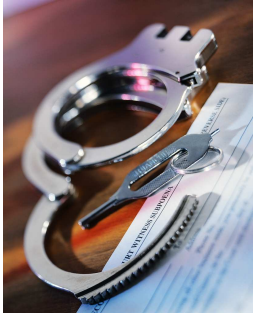
City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Mail to: Robin Hamre, Moorhead Police Department, P.O. Box 817, Moorhead, MN 56561-0817.

IS IT A CIVIL OR CRIMINAL MATTER?



Situation: Police officers are called to a disturbance in an apartment. The property manager is the complainant. Upon their arrival, it is learned that the disturbance is caused by unauthorized occupants of an apartment. The real tenant is nowhere to be found. The landlord wants the unauthorized occupant removed by police.

Is this a civil or criminal matter?

That depends. If the landlord allowed the additional people to move into the apartment, or turned a blind eye to the situation for any length of time, then the landlord will need to go through the civil eviction process to have them removed. Or, if the authorized tenant sublet the apartment with the landlord's permission, then the landlord will need to go through the civil eviction process to have them removed.

Police officers will remove an unauthorized occupant if the landlord did

not approve of the arrangement ahead of time and there is no clause in the lease allowing subletting by the authorized tenant. Then the occupant can be removed by police and trespassed off the property for up to a year. The landlord may still want to treat the situation as a lease violation with the authorized tenant and pursue an eviction. The bottom line is that the landlord cannot use the officers to do an end run around the eviction process when it is legally necessary.

Common causes for rental registration suspension

Since adopting Moorhead City Code Section 9-7-12 in 1984, landlords have really stepped up to the plate by helping to control disorderly behavior that occurs on their property. The number of calls for service for disorderly behavior in rental properties has decreased significantly and this is largely due to landlords who respond quickly and appropriately when the police department notifies them of the disorderly behavior. Only on very few occasions has it become necessary for the city to suspend a landlord's rental registration certificate due to disorderly behavior of the tenants. But when it does happen, what are the reasons?

Reason #1: Landlord does not respond to letters from the police department making them aware of the problem. Ignoring the problem does not make it go away. A simple phone call from the landlord to the police department sends the message that the landlord is concerned about the problem and willing to work on abating it.

Reason #2: The landlord expresses an attitude of powerlessness to address the behavior. Landlords are not powerless. Landlords have an effective tool to address disorderly behavior - the lease. But the lease must be written well and a landlord must be willing to enforce the terms no matter what.

Reason #3: The landlord takes ineffective actions to address the disorderly behavior. This is a common occurrence as the school year winds down. Landlords would like to wait it out until their tenants leave at the end of the school year. So they warn, and warn, and warn again. A lot of disorderly behavior can and does occur during this wait because the tenants are well aware the end of their tenancy is near.

Reason #4: The landlord treats "landlording" as a hobby - not a business. Being a landlord is not an easy task. Landlords large and small should work on increasing their knowledge of landlord/tenant law or be willing to pay an attorney to do it for them.

Reason #5: Landlords do inadequate tenant screening. Landlords who do not have a system in place for pre-screening their tenants are going to end up with tenants that were unable to find housing with landlords who do screen. Often the tenants causing the disorderly behavior have a history of this type of behavior and shop for the landlord that doesn't screen well.

Reason #6: Landlords don't support the actions of their property managers. Often property managers know that something has to be done, but are feeling pressure from landlords to keep the apartments full no matter what or to not spend money on evictions. Maintaining this course of action will only hurt the landlord in the long run when his or her rental registration certificate gets suspended for a number of months. Support your property manager and allow them to deal with problem tenants in an effective manner, even if it means a vacant apartment.



As a new school year rolls around, tons of college students will be looking for housing. Many of them have never lived away from home or off-campus before.

While most college students are excellent tenants, it is still a good idea to be pro-active and help them learn how to be a responsible tenant and neighbor. Here are a few tips and hints to help you navigate the special situations that often accompany college age tenants.

Provide them with the "What Every Tenant Should Know" brochure published by the Moorhead Police Department and available from the MPD or on line at : <http://www.moorheadpolice.com/citizenInvolvement/crimeFree.asp> . This publication will give your new tenants lots of information about how the MPD deals with noisy parties and other disorderly behavior.

Make sure your new tenants are aware if there are any other disorderly incidents which have been recorded against the rental property in the past year. Remind them that the number of disorderly events does not start over with new tenants. In other words, if prior tenants had two disorderly events and your new tenants have one, the city has

Student Tenants

now logged three disorderly events against this property and will expect aggressive action on the part of the landlord to abate the problem. The new tenants will need to be very careful if they choose to entertain guests that their gathering remains orderly and quiet.

If you have multiple college student tenants, make sure your tenants understand that the terms of the lease apply to all of them. This means that each roommate is responsible for the other roommate's actions. So if one roommate likes to party, the other roommates will suffer the consequences unless they can get their party animal roommate to tow the line.

Get the license plates of all the vehicles that the tenants will be driving and pay special attention to overcrowding issues. This is a common complaint by neighbors to rental property which is occupied by college students. The students in their effort to save money will invite another students to live with them thereby splitting the rent five ways, rather than four.

Put a time limit on the number of times a guest can stay over in one month. This will help eliminate the long term "guest" (who is really a tenant).

Encourage your tenants to introduce themselves to their neighbors. There are some neighborhoods that have suffered many years of rowdy col-

lege parties and they are subsequently very protective of their neighborhood. They have no qualms about picking up the phone to call the police if they feel a party is getting out of hand. If your tenants introduce themselves to the neighbors, this may help open the door to honest communication. Neighbors may try to contact the tenants to ask them to quiet down before calling the police if they know the tenants.

Snow removal and lawn mowing will become an issue if it isn't done. You may have it in your lease that your tenants are responsible for these two maintenance items, but they may not do it. The City will not accept the excuse that it is your tenants' responsibility. The City will always look to the landlord to rectify the situation.

Finally, college students may need a bit more hands on management from you. Quarterly inspections are not a bad idea. That way you can check that the garbage is not piling up; that there are not extra beds in the furnace room; that the smoke detectors still have batteries and the like.



Moorhead Police

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