

TRUTH IN RENTING

A guide to the rights and responsibilities of residential tenants and landlords in New Jersey





DCA
NJ DEPARTMENT OF CommunityAffairs

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Table of Contents

Overview of Truth in Renting Act **1**
The Lease **2**
Mobile Home Leases – Private Residential Leasehold Communities Law **3**
Public Housing Leases **4**
Renewal of a Lease Agreement **4**
Cable Installation **5**
Pets **5**
Termination of a Lease Agreement **7**
Modification of the Rental Premises for People with Disabilities **10**
Right of Entry **11**
Filing a complaint for unlawful entry and detainer **11**
Access to the property **12**
Security Deposits **12**
Discrimination **15**
Disposition of Personal Property **16**
Nonpayment and Distraint **18**
Consumer Fraud Protection **18**
Credit Checks and Background Checks **18**
Rent **18**
Rent Control/Rent Increases **19**
Public Financed and Subsidized Housing **20**
Property Tax Rebate for Tenants **21**
New Jersey Homestead Property Tax Credit **21**
Identity of Landlord **22**
Habitability **23**
Reporting Housing Code Violations **23**
Child-Protection Window Guards/Screens **24**
Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors **24**
Locks **25**
State Heat and Utility Requirements **25**
Rent Receivership for Substandard Housing and Diversion of Utilities **26**
Multifamily Housing Preservation and Receivership **26**
Public Housing Maintenance **27**
Federal Lead-Based Paint Disclosure **27**
State Lead-Based Paint Disclosure **28**
Post of Drinking Water Test Results **28**
Remedies if the landlord fails to maintain the property in a habitable condition **29**
Flood Plain Notification Requirement **31**
Crime Insurance Information **32**
Eviction **32**
Applicability **33**
Exceptions **33**
Filing a Complaint for Eviction **33**
Judgment for Possession **33**
“Self-help” Evictions **34**

Causes for Eviction **34**
Evictions for Owner-Occupied Two-and Three-Family Dwellings **40**
Rooming and Boarding House Evictions **40**
Public Housing Evictions **41**
Penalties for Eviction Law Violations **41**
Reprisal – Civil Rights of Tenants **41**
Procedures for Recovery of Premises **42**
Foreclosure **42**
Notice Requirements to Tenants Prior to the Transfer of Title Due to a Foreclosure Action **43**
Notice Requirements to Tenants After the Transfer of Title Due to a Foreclosure Action **43**
Senior Citizens and Disabled Tenants in Condominium or Cooperative Conversion **44**
Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy **44**
Tenant Protection Act of 1992 **44**
Disclosure Statement to Senior Citizen Housing Residents **44**
New Jersey Judiciary Ombudsman Offices **46**
Anti-Discrimination Offices **46**
New Jersey's Legal Services Programs **47**
Additional Agencies and Organizations **48**

Greetings from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

When an individual renter and a private individual, corporation, or government agency, the landlord, enter into an agreement to pay money in exchange for housing, a landlord tenant relationship is created. This agreement, the lease, can either be oral or memorialized in writing. Residential leases include private homes, apartment and condominium units, or mobile homes. The lease agreement entered into between the landlord and tenant sets forth the rights and responsibilities of both parties in accordance with Federal and New Jersey statutes, regulations, restrictions, and case law.

In accordance with the Truth in Renting Act, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has posted this reference guide to highlight important information regarding the rights and responsibilities of residential landlords and tenants in New Jersey. This publication highlights information about lease agreements, payment, and collection of rent, habitability, evictions, senior citizens and protected tenants, foreclosures, security deposits, and other topics pertaining to residential tenancies in New Jersey.

If you believe you need legal advice, contact an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney contact legal services or public organizations that can provide legal services for both landlords and tenants.

Finally, congratulations on renting your residential unit in New Jersey. The Department hopes that you find this resource guide helpful.

Overview of Truth in Renting Act

The Department of Community Affairs has provided this statement to highlight the primary legal rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords of residential rental dwelling units in New Jersey. This statement is available in English and Spanish languages and it is posted on the Department of Community Affairs' website, hereinafter the Department. The Department website is:

https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/codes/offices/landlord_tenant_information.html

This shall serve as an informational document only and is not intended as legal advice, and it does not substitute for consulting with a lawyer about specific facts and circumstances. Further, nothing therein shall be construed as binding on or affecting judicial determinations issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Every landlord subject to the Truth in Renting Act, **(N.J.S.A. 46:8-43 to 51),** hereinafter the Act, is required to distribute one copy of the Truth in Renting Statement to each of their tenants within 30 days after it has been posted by the Department on its website and shall thereafter provide a copy of the most current statement to each new tenant at or prior to the time the tenant executes a lease for the rental unit.

The Act calls for distribution of the statement by the landlord to all tenants with a rental term of at least one month living in residences with more than two dwelling units, or more than three if the landlord occupies one of the units. The Act does not require distribution to residents of hotels, motels, or other guest houses serving transient or seasonal tenants (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-44**).

A landlord who violates any provisions of the Act, contrary to the legal rights of tenants shall be liable for a penalty of not more than $100.00 per offense (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-47**). Such penalty shall be collected and enforced by summary proceedings pursuant to the Penalty Enforcement Law (**N.J.S.A. 2A-58-1 et seq.**). The Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part in the county in which the rental premises are located shall have jurisdiction over such proceedings (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-47**).

The Department does not have jurisdiction over the administration of the courts, nor can the Department render legal advice. This publication is based on existing New Jersey statutes, regulations, and court cases that concern landlord-tenant relations; however, this publication is not a complete summary of all laws, regulations, and court cases that concern landlord-tenant relations in New Jersey. Any person who plans to initiate a legal action resulting from a landlord-tenant dispute may wish to consult the appropriate enforcing agency, a county legal services agency, private counsel, or an owner's, tenant's, or mobile home organization. A list of additional agencies and organizations that may be available to provide assistance is located in the appendix section of this publication. Please be advised that this guide may be amended by the Department as required, and will be posted on the Department's website accordingly.

If you would like more detailed information on New Jersey landlord-tenant law, you may review the various state statutes identified in this guide. You may search the statutes by looking at the table of contents or you may enter a keyword in the search bar, i.e. Security Deposit Law.

The Lease

In New Jersey a landlord-tenant relationship is created when a landlord allows another person to use a dwelling unit for a specified period of time in exchange for rent. A dwelling unit is defined as an apartment, a house, a room, or a mobile home or mobile home space. The tenant should read the rental agreement before signing. It is advisable for the tenant to obtain a copy of the lease for their records at the time that the lease is signed. If a new landlord takes over the building, both the new landlord and the tenant must honor the pre-existing rental agreement until it expires.

Requirements of a residential lease in New Jersey:

1. Parties to a lease must be at least 18 years old and mentally competent. (**N.J.S.A. 9:17-B-1; Morgan v. Sandford Brown Institute, 225 N.J. 289, 310 (2016)**)
2. Landlord and tenant are required to include their names in the lease agreement.
3. Lease can be either written or oral. If written, lease must be in plain language and written so the average person can understand it (**N.J.S.A. 56:12-2; Morgan v. Sandford Brown Institute, 225 N.J. 289, 310 (2016)**).
4. Any fees that the landlord intends to charge should be clearly stated, i.e. late fees and attorney fees.
5. In order to avoid confusion, it is recommended that the lease contain the following provisions:
    - **a.** Conditions of occupancy;
    - **b.** Description of the rental space;
    - **c.** Renewal provisions;
    - **d.** Late rent penalty provisions;
    - **e.** Landlord and tenant responsibilities for the amount of rent, pets, utility expenses and owner responsibilities associated with the rental of the premises;
    - **f.** Restrictions on subletting or assigning of the lease agreement;
    - **g.** Requirement to provide copies of keys to the landlord by the tenant;
    - **h.** Tenant's requirement to obtain renter's insurance; and
    - **i.** Other provisions which clarify the terms of the lease agreement.

The landlord should provide specific information to tenants:

1. Lead paint EPA approved information pamphlet (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-6.6**);
2. Truth in Renting statement, (which does not apply to buildings of two (2) or fewer units and owner-occupied premises of three (3) or fewer units (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-44 to -46**));
3. Flood zone notification (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-50**);
4. Child protection window guards (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-27.1 (c), (d)**);
5. Bed bugs (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-10.2**);
6. Late fees (**N.J.S.A. 2A-42-6.1 to -6.3**);
7. Dishonored payment fees (**N.J.S.A. 2A:32A-1**); and
8. Domestic violence termination policy (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.6 to -9.7**).

Additionally, if clearly stated in the lease agreement, the landlord may require the tenant to pay the landlord the costs of the landlord's attorney fees and court costs in the event of an eviction action for nonpayment of rent or for other legal actions; a landlord also may assess a "late charge" when the rent is not paid by a certain date. There is a five (5) "business day" grace period for senior citizens before a late fee may be assessed. A business day does not include Saturday, Sunday, State or Federal holidays.

The written lease must expressly permit a landlord to recover reasonable attorney's fees and include late fees as part of the rent in order for a judge to consider those expenses as additional rent in a summary dispossess proceeding (**Community Realty v. Harris, 155 N.J. 212 (1998); Housing Authority & Urban Redevelopment Agency of City of Atlantic City v. Taylor, 334 N.J. Super. 572 (App. Div. 2000); Sundersan v. Royal, 386 N.J. Super. 246 (App. Div. 2005)**). If a lease contains provisions that violate state statutes, local ordinances, or governmental regulations, or a tenant believes a provision is unreasonable, the tenant has the right to file an action in Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part in the county where the building is located requesting the court to remove the provision from the lease (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-48**).

Mobile Home Leases – Private Residential Leasehold Communities Law N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2 to -21.

Mobile homeowners or residents of private residential leasehold communities are also tenants if they rent space in either of these types of communities. Therefore, they are afforded certain protections under New Jersey statutes and regulations, i.e, the Anti-Eviction Act, Homestead Property, Tax Credit Act and special protections under the Mobile Home Act. As set forth in New Jersey case law (**Fromet Properties, Inc. v. Burl, 249 N.J. Super. 601 (App. Div. 1996); Hale v. Farrakhan, 3990 N.J. Super. 335 (App. Div. 2007); Pohlman v. Metropolitan Trailer Park, Inc., 126 N.J. Super. 114 (Ch. Div. 1973)**), it has been established that other landlord tenant laws are applicable including, but not limited to, security deposits, receivership, truth in renting, landlord tenant law, discrimination based on familial status, self-help eviction, distraint, and reprisal (*Tenant's Rights in New Jersey* written and published by Legal Services of New Jersey, 2014).

In accordance with **N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2 to -21**, a mobile home park or private residential leasehold landlord or operator is required to:

1. Offer a written lease for at least 12 months to each household within the park or community. The lease must be offered within 30 days from the time the new owner lawfully moves in;

2. Provide the occupant with a copy of all park/community rules and regulations prior to signing the lease;

3. Post a copy of park/community rules and regulations in a recreation hall or some other public location within the community where they can be easily located;

4. Fully disclose all fees, charges, and assessments, which must be based on actual costs incurred and all rules and regulations before the occupant moves in;

5. Provide a written notice of any fees, charges, and assessments within 30 days before a lease change become effective; and

6. Provide a copy of Truth in Renting statement.

A mobile park owner may not:

1. Force a tenant to buy equipment from a park owner or a particular outlet (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2**);

2. Force a tenant to either buy a mobile home or necessary equipment from a particular seller (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2**);

3. Force a tenant to move their mobile home within the park unless the move is reasonably necessary. If reasonably necessary, the park owner must serve the tenant with a 30-day written notice. In an emergency, the operator may move the mobile home, however, they are responsible for all damages to the home resulting from the move (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2**);

4. Charge a commission or fee for the sale of a mobile home unless they acted as the sales agent, nor prohibit the posting of a "for sale" on the home (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-3**);

5. Force a tenant to make a donation or gift directly or indirectly from someone who wants to rent a space in the park (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2**); and

6. No landlord or operator may deny any resident the right to sell their home within the park community or require the unit to be moved solely because it is being sold (**N.J.S.A. 46:8C-2**).

A mobile park owner may reserve the right to approve the purchaser of a mobile home but approval cannot be unreasonably withheld. Any entrance fee or other payment required by the landlord to get into a park/community accepted by a landlord or operator makes the landlord or operator a disorderly person and may result in the person making the payment able to recover double the amount paid plus losses in Superior Court where the property is located.

Public Housing Leases

Public housing authorities must follow lease regulations developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as existing state laws. The HUD regulations reference both provisions that must be included in housing authority leases and provisions that must not be included: questions regarding public housing can be directed to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New Jersey State Office, 1 Newark Center, Attn: Public Housing, Newark, New Jersey 07102-5260, (973) 622-7900.

Renewal of a Lease Agreement

Many written leases contain a clause detailing what needs to be done to renew or extend the current lease term. The lease may, for instance, have a clause that states that unless either the landlord or tenant terminates the lease, it will renew automatically. Most yearly leases require a 60 to 90-day notice to the landlord by the tenant requesting terminatation of the existing lease. If

a tenant fails to give proper written notice or if notice of intent to terminate is not given in time, the lease will renew automatically.

A yearly lease that is not renewed automatically becomes a month to month lease when the current lease term ends. A month to month lease will renew automatically for another month unless the landlord or tenant acts to terminate the lease. This rule applies to both oral and written leases (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-10**).

When the lease term ends, the landlord can offer the tenant a new lease with amended terms and conditions. In order to do this, the landlord must provide the tenant with written notice terminating the existing lease and offering a new lease. The landlord's notice must clearly detail the changes made to the existing lease.

No landlord of residential rental properties except those in owner occupied two or three family dwellings, motels or hotels, transient, or seasonal units may fail to renew any lease, regardless of whether it is written or oral unless they have good cause not to renew the lease. The good causes for eviction are detailed under the section entitled, "Eviction," (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18:61.3**). Tenants of two- or three- family owner occupied buildings should refer to the section entitled, "Evictions for Owner-Occupied Two and Three Family Dwellings."

Cable Installation

A landlord may not forbid or prevent installation of cable service or unreasonably restrict the tenant from installing an individual satellite dish or require advance payment for permission to install cable or satellite.

Installation must be in compliance with the Federal Communications (FCC) Regulations (**47 C.F.R. Section 1.4000**). If a tenant or landlord wishes to file a complaint regarding the lease or local government restrictions regarding installation of cable or a satellite dish, they may contact the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street S.W. – Washington D.C. 20554; Attn: Media Bureau.

A landlord may restrict installation of cable or a satellite dish communication system in common areas such as the stairwells, roofs, or exterior walls of a multiple dwelling. Landlord may also restrict installation to prevent damage to the property, if there is a safety risk, or the property is a historic property or in a historic district.

A landlord may disallow the installation of an individually owned satellite dish if there is a common antenna available for use by the residents and the costs are the same for the tenant (**N.J.S.A. 48:5A-49/47 C.F.R. 1.4000**).

Pets

Generally, landlords have a right to include a "no pets," provision in the lease agreement. There is no state law that prohibits landlords from requiring lease agreements that exclude pets in rental property, except in certain senior citizen housing projects and for handicapped, blind, or deaf tenants. **George Young v. Victor Savinon, et al., 201 N.J. Super. 1**, established the precedent that allows tenants in certain circumstances to keep their existing pets at their rental

units. In this case, the court found that tenants that were allowed to have pets and actually had pets living in their rental units at the beginning of their tenancy and continued to have those pets throughout their tenancies could not have their leases changed (upon renewal) by the new (or existing) landlord to prohibit the tenants from keeping the pets that they currently had. However, the landlord could prohibit the housing of any additional pets that those tenants may acquire in the future. A landlord may also prohibit existing and future tenants who do not own or maintain pets from caring for or maintaining pets on the premises.

The Pets in Housing Projects law, **N.J.S.A. 2A:42-103, et seq.**, defines "senior citizen housing project," as any building or structure having three or more rental dwelling units. It does not apply to owner-occupied premises that do not have more than three rental dwelling units, or any health care facility. Any senior citizen residing in a senior citizen housing project and providing written notice to the landlord is allowed to own or care for a pet.

A landlord may refuse to renew a tenant's lease because of a pet, under the following circumstances:

1. If the pet's existence or behavior violates federal, state, or local building, health or use codes;
2. If the tenant fails to properly care for the pet;
3. If the tenant fails to control the pet, when taking the pet to or from the building, or if the tenant fails to take prompt action to remove any pet waste when requested by the landlord; and
4. If the tenant fails to keep the pet's waste functions confined to areas that do not interfere with the common areas or entrance and exist of anyone to or from the senior citizen housing project.

A municipal court may declare a dog to be potentially dangerous if the dog:

1. Causes bodily injury to a person during an unprovoked attack, and poses a serious threat of bodily injury to a person;
2. Poses a threat or severely injured or killed another pet; or
3. The dog has been trained or encouraged to engage in unprovoked attacks on people or other pets.

A landlord may require a tenant to remove a pet from the rental premises if the pet is a continuing nuisance to the welfare or property of the landlord or the other residents. If the tenant does not remove the pet, the landlord may file for an eviction action for violating the lease due to a continuing nuisance created by the pet. The landlord has the burden of proving that the pet is a continuing nuisance. A continuing nuisance means that the pet's existence interferes with the health, security, and comfort of other tenants or the number, size, breed, or species of the pet is inappropriate for the type of housing accommodations.

Landlords have the right to create reasonable written rules and regulations regarding the care and maintenance of pets. These rules and regulations should be incorporated into the tenant's lease.

The Law Against Discrimination as set forth in **N.J.S.A. 10:5-29.2**, prohibits discrimination against handicapped, blind, or deaf people in renting or leasing housing accommodations. A handicapped, blind, or deaf person who has a service or guide dog, or who obtains a service or guide dog, shall have full and equal access to all housing accommodations and shall not be required to pay extra compensation. Any lease or rental agreement prohibiting pets shall not apply to a service or guide dog owned by a handicapped, blind, or deaf tenant. The tenant is responsible for any damages done to the premises by the service or guide dog.

Tenants should maintain control of their pets and obey any lease requirements regarding the care and control of a pet's behavior, designated activity/walking areas and waste cleanup. Tenants should obey all Federal, State, and Local laws regarding the maintenance of their pets. Pets should not create a continuing nuisance for other residents or the landlord. Landlords are not responsible for the actions of a tenant's pet, unless the landlord is aware of the pet's vicious propensity and fails to take action. If tenants do not obey pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, the landlord may have cause to ask the tenant to remove the pet from the premises or the landlord may have cause for an eviction action.

Termination of a Lease Agreement

The only reason a landlord can terminate a lease is if they offer a new lease to the tenant with different terms, i.e. higher rent or new rules and regulations, and the tenant does not agree. A landlord cannot evict a tenant just because the lease term has ended. It is important to note that termination is distinguishable from eviction. For more detailed information, see the eviction section of this publication.

If a tenant moves out before the end of the lease, the landlord may be able to hold the tenant responsible for the rent that becomes due until the premises is rented again, or until the lease ends, whichever occurs first. If the tenant moves out before the lease term has expired, the landlord must attempt to re-rent the apartment for the remaining months on the lease and prove that there was an attempt to re-rent the unit, i.e. advertising the premises for rent and interviewing tenants (**Sommer v. Kridel, 74 N.J. 446 (1977); McGuire v. City of Jersey City, 125 N.J. 310 (1991); Fanarjian v. Moskowitz, 237 N.J. Super. 395 (App. Div. 1989)**).

A tenant may terminate a lease for the following reasons:

1. **Moving out because of bad conditions** - if the landlord fails to make needed repairs the tenant must have proof of the bad conditions. If this is the case, the law holds the landlord responsible for breaking the lease by failing to fulfill their contractual obligation to provide safe and decent housing. This is called constructive eviction (**Reste Realty Corp v. Cooper, 53 N.J. 444 (1969); Harel Assoc. v. Cooper Healthcare Prof. Serv., Inc., 271 N.J. Super. 405 (App. Div. 1994)**).
2. **Housing that is not handicapped accessible** - if a landlord cannot or will not make a dwelling unit handicapped-accessible, at the landlord's own expense, for a disabled tenant or a member of the tenant's immediate family who is disabled as a result of the loss of one or more limbs or who requires an assistive device to move about, the lease can be terminated on the 40th day following receipt by the landlord of a notice of lease

termination and certification from a treating physician on a form submitted by the tenant to the landlord (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

The same procedure applies to the termination of the lease in the event of the death of the tenant or the tenant's spouse, except that a specific form is not prescribed (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.1**). These provisions for early termination do not apply to any lease that specifically provides otherwise.

3. **Lease Termination Due to Disabling Illness** - under the Lease Termination Due to Disabling Illness, Accident or Death Law, a tenant may break their lease, under certain conditions. A 40-day written notice of lease termination is required in each instance. The tenant must vacate and return possession of the property to the landlord at least five working days prior to the 40th day following the landlord's receipt of the notice to terminate. Rent must be paid until the termination date (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

    A. In certain circumstances, a tenant suffering a disabling illness or accident resulting in a loss of income may break a lease having a term of one or more years after submitting a form prescribed by law (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

    B. Tenants 62 years of age or older that are accepted into an assisted living facility, a nursing home, or a continuing care retirement community may break their lease. The tenant, spouse, or legal representative must provide the landlord with written notice of termination of the lease and attach a certification from a treating physician stating that the tenant or spouse needs to be in an assisted living facility, nursing home, or continuing care retirement community and documentation that the tenant has been accepted into one of those facilities (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

    C. Tenants 62 years of age or older that do not already reside in low- or moderate-income housing and are accepted into low- or moderate-income housing may break their lease agreements. The tenant, spouse, or legal representative must provide the landlord with a written notice of termination of the lease and attach documentation i.e., a lease or intent to lease low or moderate housing (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

4. **Termination of the Lease Due to Domestic Violence** - according to the New Jersey Safe Housing Act (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.4 et seq.**) victims of domestic violence may terminate their lease without penalty prior to the expiration of the lease by providing the landlord with a written notice that the tenant or a child of the tenant faces an imminent threat of serious physical harm from a specific person, (that must be identified in the written notice), if the tenant remains on the premises, and by fulfilling any of the following requirements:

    A. Has a certified copy of a permanent restraining order issued by a court under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991 (**N.J.S.A. 2C:25-17 et seq.**) and protecting the tenant or child from the person named in the written notice;

    B. Has a certified copy of a permanent restraining order from another jurisdiction issued pursuant to that jurisdiction's laws concerning domestic violence, and protecting the tenant or child from the person named in the written notice;

    C. A law enforcement agency record documenting the domestic violence, or certifying that the tenant or a child of the tenant is a victim of domestic violence;

D. Medical documentation of the domestic violence provided by a health care provider;

E. Certification, provided by a certified Domestic Violence Specialist, or the director of a designated domestic violence agency, that the tenant or a child of the tenant is a victim of domestic violence; or

F. Other documentation or certification, provided by a licensed social worker, that the tenant or a child of the tenant is a victim of domestic violence.

Lease Termination due to domestic violence shall take effect on the thirtieth day following receipt by the landlord of one of the documents listed above and a written notice from the tenant that they intend to vacate the premises and terminate the lease. The rent shall be pro-rated up to the time of the lease termination (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.4 et seq.**).

If there are tenants on the lease other than the tenant who has given notice of termination of the lease due to domestic violence, the co-tenant's lease also terminates. The co-tenant may enter into a new lease agreement with the landlord at the landlord's option.

Where the leased premises are under the control of a public housing authority or redevelopment agency, the victim of domestic violence must give notice in accordance with any relevant regulations pertaining to public housing leases.

If a tenant terminates the lease agreement prior to the expiration of the lease pursuant to the Safe Housing Act, (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.6**), the tenant is entitled to the return of their security deposit. Within 15 business days after the lease is terminated, the landlord shall make available the return of the tenant's security deposit, plus any interest earned, to the tenant or the tenant's agent. In addition, within three business days after the lease is terminated, the landlord must notify the tenant in writing of when and where the tenant can pick up the security deposit. The notice must be given by personal delivery or mailed to the last known address, indicating the location of the security deposit and the hours in which the tenant may pick up their security deposit. The landlord must provide a duplicate notice to the relocation officer. If there is no relocation officer, notice must be provided to the municipal clerk. The security deposit must be available for return during normal business hours for thirty (30) days in the municipality where the rental property is located. The security deposit must be accompanied by an itemized list of the interest earned and any deductions. Any security money not demanded by and returned to the tenant or the tenant's designated agent within 30 days shall be redeposited or reinvested by the landlord, in accordance with the Security Deposit law. The landlord may charge the tenant for any money due the landlord under the terms of the lease, including damages to the property that are not ordinary wear and tear and any rent due and owing at the time the lease is terminated (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-19**

A landlord shall not disclose information documenting domestic violence that has been provided to the landlord by a victim of domestic violence. The information shall not be entered into any shared databases or provided to any person or entity. However, the information may be used as evidence in an eviction proceeding, legal action for unpaid rent or damages from the tenancy, with the consent of the tenant, or as otherwise allowed by law.

This law does not apply to transient or seasonal rentals.

5. **Service Members Civil Relief Act** - a service member leasing an apartment before entering the military has the legal right under this act to terminate the lease under the following circumstances (**50 U.S.C.A. § 3955**):

A. At any time after the renter's entry into military service; or

B. The service member, while in military service, executes the lease and thereafter receives military orders for a permanent change of station outside of the continental United States or to deploy with a military unit for a period of not less than 90 days.

The service member must provide the landlord written notice of termination of the lease and a copy of the military orders. Notice of termination of the lease must be provided in advance. Termination of the lease is effective on the last day of the month following the month in which the notice is delivered. The service member will incur no further monetary responsibility after providing the landlord with the proper notices. The landlord is required to return the security deposit in accordance with the applicable Security Deposit Law (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-26**).

Moreover, if the rent does not exceed $3,991.90 per month, eviction actions may be stayed by the courts for three (3) months unless the court finds that the tenant's ability to pay rent is not materially affected by reason of the military service. This amount is current as of 2020 and increases each year in accordance with the CPI component for housing.

For further information about the act including specific notice requirements and time frames, military personnel can contact the Legal Assistance Section of Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base at (609) 754-2010 or the Reserve Office of Fort Monmouth Legal Services at (732) 532- 4371.

Modification of the Rental Premises for People with Disabilities

It is illegal for a landlord to refuse to rent to a tenant because of the tenant's handicap or disability. The landlord is not required to modify existing rental premises occupied, or to be occupied, by a person with a disability. However, the landlord also cannot refuse to make reasonable changes (at the expense of the disabled person) as may be necessary to afford the disabled person full enjoyment of the premises. The tenant may be required to restore the premises to the condition that existed before the modification, except for reasonable wear and tear. The landlord may also require a description of the modifications and proof of required permits (**N.J.A.C. 13:13-3.4(f)**).

The landlord may require the tenant deposit money into an escrow account each month to cover the costs of removal of the modifications when the tenant moves out. The landlord can only require the tenant to deposit the money into the escrow account if they can prove that the costs of restoring the premises to its original condition will be expensive. Payments into an escrow account must be affordable and must cease when the amount needed to restore the unit to its original condition is reached. Interest on the account goes to the tenant.

New Jersey State Law also allows a disabled tenant to terminate the lease agreement if the unit is not handicapped accessible. A lease can be terminated if the landlord refuses to make the unit handicapped accessible after the tenant requests that the unit be made handicapped accessible and the landlord is unable or unwilling to do so (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-9.2**).

Right of Entry

In general, a landlord does not have the right to enter a residential rental premises without consent of the tenant or a judgement from the Superior Court of New Jersey. There is no case law in New Jersey that either requires a tenant to give a landlord a key or prohibits a landlord from keeping a key to a rented unit. The landlord does not have the right to come into the dwelling unit whenever he or she wants to enter. However, the courts have generally approved lease provisions that require the tenant provide the landlord with a key citing emergency circumstances where the lack of a key could result in the loss of life or property in the case of an emergency. Unless otherwise clearly stated in the lease agreement, a tenant disputing the landlord's right to a key can simply refuse to provide the landlord with a key. The landlord may then seek an action for eviction based on the tenant's refusal to provide the landlord with a key. The court may deny the landlord the right to have a key if the tenant can prove that the landlord has abused the right to enter the premises. Moreover, the landlord may be liable to the tenant for damage or stolen property if the landlord is known to have a key and known to enter the rental unit when the tenant is not home. In a written lease, the landlord's duty not to enter the premises in called the covenant of quiet enjoyment which means that the tenant can control who may or may not enter the dwelling unit (**N.J.S.A. 2A-39-1**).

A landlord shall be guilty of an unlawful entry and detainer if they enter the rental premises peacefully or forcibly and then detain or keep possession of the property or take the property by force, the threat of force, or remove the tenant's personal property without consent of the tenant or a judgment from the Superior Court of New Jersey. With the exceptions noted above, if a landlord enters a tenant's unit while the tenant is not home, without the tenant's permission, it is forceable entry (**N.J.S.A. 2A:39-2**). If a tenant willfully and without force holds over or remains at the property after they have been given a written notice demanding delivery of possession (Notice to Quit) of the rental premises from the tenant to the landlord, the tenant shall be guilty of an unlawful detainer. If the tenant is found guilty of an unlawful detainer, the tenant shall pay the landlord double the rent for the holdover time that the tenant possesses the premises (**N.J.S.A. 2A:39-2**).

Filing a complaint for unlawful entry and detainer

Any legal action for a forcible unlawful entry and detainer, forcible detainer, and unlawful detainer shall be brought before the Superior Court, and the court may hear and make a determination in that action. If a landlord enters the rental premises unlawfully, a trespass complaint may be filed by the tenant with the local police department, under the New Jersey Criminal Code for "defiant trespass" (**N.J.S.A. 2A:39-6**).

A tenant or landlord depending on the judge's decision shall be entitled to possession of the real property and shall recover all damages that may have been caused by the unlawful entry

and detainer, including, court costs and attorney's fees. When it is not appropriate to return the person to possession of the premises, treble (3x) damages shall be awarded (**N.J.S.A. 2A:39-8**).

Access to the property

The Bureau of Housing Inspection, or an authorized representative, has the authority to enter and inspect at any reasonable time any multiple dwelling (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-1.1 et seq.**). A multiple dwelling is a building with three or more independent dwelling units. It is the duty of the landlord to notify the tenant when the Bureau of Housing Inspection has scheduled the property for an inspection.

The Bureau of Housing Inspection regulations also provide that upon reasonable notification tenants must give the landlord and the landlord's employees access to the dwelling unit for the purpose of inspection and maintenance. Reasonable notification is normally one day. However, in the case of safety or structural emergencies immediate access shall be granted (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-1.2**).

Consent of the tenant is required for inspection of the tenant's private living quarters that are subject to the lease agreement except in the following cases (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-1.10 (d)**):

1. In case of emergencies where a condition exists that pose an immediate threat to the safety or health of persons using or near the premises.
2. Where access to the premises has been denied and inspection is required to implement the requirements of the Bureau of Housing Inspection.

A landlord may request entry to a rental unit to perform other services or to show the unit for re-renting or sale. However, there is no statute or available case law that obligates a tenant to allow a landlord access to the rental premises for purposes other than inspection, maintenance, and repair. Therefore, the issue of entry in other cases should be addressed in the terms of the lease agreement. Disputes that arise regarding a landlord's right of entry must be decided on a case-by-case basis in court.

Security Deposits

The Security Deposit Law applies to most residential rental properties, including mobile homes. The exception is an owner-occupied two-, or three-family dwelling. A tenant in an owner-occupied two-, or three-family dwelling may, however, make this provision applicable to their tenancy 30 days after sending a written request to the landlord that the landlord fulfill the requirements of the Security Deposit Law. In New Jersey, the landlord is not required to collect a security deposit from the tenant, however, if they do, they must follow prescribed rules and regulations (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-26**).

The maximum-security deposit to be collected by the landlord cannot be more than one and one-half times one month's rent (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.2**). It can be less. Any additional yearly security deposit increase may not exceed 10% of the current security deposit. A landlord may not charge a pet security deposit if it exceeds one and one-half times one month's rent when combined with the regular security deposit. In the case of **Brownstone Arms v. Asher, 121 N.J. Super. 401**

(1972), and Reilly v. Weiss, 406 N.J. Super. 71 (2009), the courts determined that advanced rents in excess of one and one-half times the monthly rental payment violate the Security Deposit Law. Therefore, any prepaid funds held to secure future rents are considered to be a part of the security deposit. This includes the last month's rent. It does not matter how the prepaid funds are labeled. The landlord may only require one and one-half times the tenant's monthly rent as security and the first month's rent at the inception of the lease. That means the landlord may not require more than two and one-half times the monthly rent at the inception of the lease, this includes the security deposit and the first month's rent. There is no time limitation within the statute for making the request for a deposit.

The security deposit money continues to be the property of the person making the deposit and must be held in trust by the person receiving the money. This means that the person who receives the money must not use the money in any way not permitted by law. The security deposit shall not be comingled with the personal property or become an asset of the landlord.

A landlord or designee who receives security deposit money for ten or less units must deposit that money in an insured bank or savings and loan association located in New Jersey in an interest-bearing account at the current interest rate at the time of deposit. A landlord or designee who receives security deposit money for 10 or more units has the option of investing the money in an insured money market fund of a New Jersey-based investment company where the investments mature in one year or less, or deposit that money in a State or federally charted bank, or savings, and loan association located in New Jersey in an account bearing a variable rate of interest. This section of the Security Deposit Law does not apply to security deposits for seasonal use or rental. Seasonal use or rental means use or rental for a term of not more than 125 consecutive days for residential purposes by a person having a permanent place of residence elsewhere. Seasonal use or rental does not mean use or rental of living quarters for seasonal, temporary, or migrant farm workers in connection with work or place where work is being performed. The landlord shall have the burden of proving that the use or rental of the residential property is seasonal (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-19 (d)**).

The interest or earnings paid on the security deposit belongs to the tenant and shall be paid to the tenant in cash or credited toward rent due and owing on the renewal or anniversary of the tenant's lease or on January 31, if the tenant has been given written notice, that the interest payments will be paid on January 31 of each year (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-19 (c)**).

Within 30 days of receipt of the security deposit and at the time of each annual interest payment, the landlord must notify the tenant in writing of the name and address of the banking institution or investment company in which the money is deposited, the amount of the deposit, type of account, and current rate of interest for the account. In addition, the landlord must notify the tenant within 30 days of transferring security deposit money to a new landlord or moving the security deposit to another account or bank. If a tenant does not receive proper notice or is not paid interest as required, the tenant may use the security deposit for payment of rent by giving the landlord written notice that the security money plus interest at the rate of 7% per annum be applied to rent payments or payments due or to become due from the tenant. However, if the tenant does not receive the annual notice at the time of the annual interest payment, or is not paid the annual

interest, as required, the tenant must give the landlord written notice and allow the landlord 30 days to comply with the annual interest payment and notice requirements. If the landlord does not reply within the allotted time, the tenant can use his security deposit toward his rent. If the tenant's security deposit gets applied to his rent, the landlord may not make further demand for an additional security deposit (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-19.1 (c)**).

Within 30 days after the termination of a tenancy, a landlord must return the security deposit, plus interest earned less deductions, to the tenant (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.1**). Deductions may include the cost of any damages over and above normal wear and tear, and any other money due the landlord under the terms of the lease. The landlord must return the money either by personal delivery, registered, or certified mail. If there are any deductions made from the security deposit by the landlord, an itemized list of these deductions must also be sent to the tenant by registered or certified mail within 30 days from the termination of the tenancy. If the amount of money owed to the landlord for damages or unpaid rent is greater than the amount of the security deposit, the landlord may sue for the difference. No deductions shall be made from a security deposit of a tenant who remains in possession of the rental premises.

If a landlord fails to return the security deposit within 30 days, or the tenant disagrees with the amount deducted, the tenant may sue for double the amount of the security deposit that the tenant contends was wrongfully withheld. If the tenant is successful, the court may award the tenant double the amount wrongly withheld, together with court costs and reasonable attorney's fees (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.1**). However, if the tenant breaks the lease and moves out of the dwelling unit prior to the expiration of the lease, without legal cause, the lease is not considered to be terminated. The lease is considered to be terminated once the unit is re-rented or the lease expires, whichever occurs first, provided that the tenant notified the landlord as required by the lease agreement. The date the rental unit is re-rented determines the date of the termination of the breached lease, **J.C. Mitchell v. First Real Estate, 287 N.J. Super 546 (1996)**. Therefore, in the case of a broken lease agreement by the tenant, the 30 days that the landlord shall return the tenant's security deposit does not start until the landlord re-rents the rental unit, or until the lease expires, whichever occurs first.

Within five (5) business days after a tenant is displaced by fire, flood, condemnation, or evacuation, the landlord must return the security deposit. The law requires the return when either an authorized public official has posted a notice prohibiting occupancy or has certified that the displacement is expected to continue longer than seven (7) days. Within three (3) business days of having received notice of the displacement, the landlord must let the tenant know where the security deposit can be collected. The landlord may arrange to have the municipal clerk hold the security deposit so that the tenant may collect it at the clerk's office. If the tenant has not collected the deposit within 30 days, the landlord can redeposit it with the banking institution or investment company with which it was deposited before the displacement. If the tenant is later able to move back into the dwelling unit but has already collected the deposit, the tenant must again pay the landlord a security deposit (one-third will be due immediately, another one-third in 30 days, and the last one-third in 60 days) (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.1**).

If the property is sold or transferred it is the duty of the new owner to obtain the security deposit, plus accrued interest on the tenant's deposit, that was collected by the former owner. Whether or not the deposit and interest are transferred, the new owner is responsible for the investment of the security deposit, giving all notices and paying interest, and for the return of the security deposit, plus any accrued earnings or interest (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21**).

The Small Claims section of the Special Civil Part of the Superior Court, Law Division in the county where the unit is located or in the county where the landlord resides has jurisdiction in actions involving security deposits where the amount does not exceed $5,000, including any applicable penalties, but not including court costs. For actions over $5,000 but not exceeding $15,000, a person must file in the Special Civil Part of the Superior Court Law Division, New Jersey Court Rule 6:11 (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.4**). There is no State agency that has jurisdiction over security deposit disputes. All disputes must be settled through court action.

Any landlord who willfully and intentionally withholds a security deposit made by or on behalf of a tenant who has received financial assistance through any State or federal program, including welfare or rental assistance, may be penalized. The landlord may be liable for a civil penalty of not less than $500 or not more than $2,000 for each offense. The penalty shall be collected and enforced by summary proceedings pursuant to the Penalty Enforcement Law (**N.J.S.A. 2A:58-12**). The State entity which made the deposits on behalf of the tenant will be entitled to any penalty amounts recovered. A tenant receiving governmental financial assistance is not required to file an action to recover security deposits withheld by a landlord in violation of this law in order to continue participation in the governmental program (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.1; N.J.S.A. 46:8-21.5**).

Any person who unlawfully uses security deposit monies may be criminally charged as a disorderly person and may be subject to a fine of not less than $200 or imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or both (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-25**).

Discrimination

Under State and federal laws, it is illegal for a landlord or rental agency to refuse to rent or discriminate in the rental of housing units. The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), **N.J.S.A. 10:5-12(g) to -(h)**, prohibits discrimination when selling or renting property and requires equal treatment in the sale or rental of housing regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, familial status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental and physical disability, nationality, or source of lawful income.

The law applies to all landlord-tenant relationships, except those involving two-family owner occupied dwellings, rooms in an owner or resident-occupied single home, and residences planned exclusively for and occupied by one sex, i.e. YMCA and age-restricted housing, as it pertains to familial status (**N.J.S.A. 10:5-5(n))**.

A landlord may refuse to rent to an individual or family if they do not have sufficient income, family is too large for the unit, overcrowded occupancy would result in violation of zoning laws, or credit history is poor (**42 U.S.C.A. § 3601 to -3610**).

Under the LAD and the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the refusal to rent to a family that includes children, with the exception of housing built for older persons and owner-occupied structures with no more than two dwelling units is prohibited under **42 U.S.C.A. § 3601 to -3610**.

A complaint against a person who refuses to rent, or who attempts to cancel a lease based on illegal discrimination may be filed in a court of competent jurisdiction, i.e. New Jersey Superior Court. Discrimination complaints pertaining to New Jersey state law violations should be reported to the proper field office of the Division of Civil Rights, New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety. Addresses and contact information of the various regional offices are located in the appendix section of this publication. If there is a federal violation, a complaint may be filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or the U.S. Attorney. For additional information regarding discrimination on housing in New Jersey, the website is http://www.nj.gov/oag/dcr/index.html

If a complaint is filed with one of the three agencies referenced above these agencies are required to investigate the complaint and take action and remedy the situation if it is found that discrimination has actually occurred. A landlord that discriminates may be required to pay monetary damages and be required to rent the unit to the complainant if a violation is determined to have occurred. Under the LAD, landlords who violate this law are subject to substantial fines and penalties, up to $10,000 for a first offense (**N.J.S.A. 10:5-14.1a(a)**).

Disposition of Personal Property

In accordance with **N.J.S.A. 2A:18-72**, a landlord of residential property may dispose of any personal property, tangible goods, manufactured, or mobile homes left on the premises after having given notice to the tenant prior to disposition of the property; or the tenant has provided the landlord with a written notice that they are relinquishing possession of the premises. The landlord may dispose of the property if they believe that the tenant has left the property on the premises with no intention of asserting any further claim to the property and the premises. Additionally, the landlord must satisfy the following conditions:

1. Written notice to the tenant with the requirements of the Abandoned Property Law concerning delivery and storage. The notice shall be sent by certified mail return receipt requested or by receipted first class mail addressed to the tenant at tenant's last known address and at any alternate address known to the landlord (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-73**); and
2. A warrant for removal has been executed and possession of the property has been restored to the landlord (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-72(b)**); or
3. The tenant has given written notice that they are voluntarily relinquishing possession of the premises (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-72(b)**).

If the abandoned property is not removed:

1. The landlord may sell the property at a public or private sale (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-78(a)**); or

2. The landlord may destroy or otherwise dispose of the property if the landlord reasonably determines that the value of the property is so low that the cost of storage and conducting a public sale would probably exceed the amount that would be realized from the sale (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-78(b)**); or
3. The landlord may sell items of value and destroy or otherwise dispose of the remaining property (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-78(c)**).

If the tenant claims the property within the timeframe provided in the notice, the landlord must make the property available for removal by the tenant without payment by the tenant of any unpaid rent.

After notifying a tenant as required by sections **N.J.S.A. 2A:18-73 to -74** (contents of notice for abandoned property), a landlord shall store all goods and other personal property of the tenant in a place of safekeeping and shall exercise reasonable care for the property, except that the landlord may promptly dispose of perishable food and shall allow an animal control agency or humane society to remove any abandoned pets. A landlord shall be entitled to reasonable storage charges and costs incidental to storage. A landlord may store property in a commercial storage facility, in which case the storage cost shall include the actual storage charge plus the reasonable cost of removal of the property to the place of storage.

If a tenant responds in writing or orally to the landlord, on or before the day specified in the required notice, that they intend to remove the property from the premises, or from the place of safekeeping if the landlord has stored the property and does not do so within the time specified in the notice or within 15 days after the written response, whichever is later, the tenant's property shall be conclusively presumed to be abandoned (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-76**).

Upon removal of property, a tenant shall reimburse the landlord for the reasonable cost of storage for the period the property was in the landlord's safekeeping, including the reasonable cost of removal of the property to a place of storage. A landlord shall not be entitled to reimbursement for storage and removal costs which are greater than the fair market value of such costs in the locale of the rental property. A landlord shall not be responsible for any loss to a tenant resulting from storage of property unless the loss was caused by the landlord's deliberate or negligent act or omission (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-77**).

A landlord may deduct from the proceeds of any sale the reasonable costs of notice, storage and sale and any unpaid rent and charges not covered by a security deposit. After deducting these amounts, the landlord shall remit to the tenant the remaining proceeds, if any, together with an itemized accounting. If the tenant, after due diligence, cannot be found the remaining proceeds shall be deposited with the Superior Court and, if not claimed within 10 years, shall escheat to the State (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-80**).

Compliance in good faith by the landlord with the requirements of the law constitutes a complete defense in any action brought by a tenant against a landlord for loss or damage to the property, however, if the landlord seizes and retains a tenant's property without complying with the law, the tenant is relieved of any liability for reimbursement of the landlord's cost and is entitled to recover up to twice the actual damages sustained (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-82**).

Nonpayment and Distraint

A landlord is prohibited from taking or holding a residential tenant's possessions for nonpayment of rent. The legal term for this practice is "distraint." A landlord cannot use distraint for money owed on a lease or other agreement for a unit used only as a residence (**N.J.S.A. 2A:33-1 to -23**).

A tenant may sue for damages resulting from distraint for nonpayment of rent in Superior Court, Special Civil Part, in the county the building is located or the county in which the landlord resides. The court may award double damages and costs of legal action to a tenant whose property was wrongfully distrained, (**N.J.S.A. 2A:33-19**). Any tenant who removes or conceals any of his personal property with the intent to delay, hinder, or defraud the landlord shall be liable for the damages to the landlord if the action of the tenant appears to be willful, the landlord shall be entitled to recover double damages (**N.J.S.A. 2A:33-21**).

When a tenant threatens to leave the unit without payment of rent and a landlord has not yet received a judgement from the court, the landlord may seek a temporary restraining order to prohibit the tenant from leaving the jurisdiction of the court (**Court Rule 4:51-5**).

Consumer Fraud Protection

Deception, fraud, misrepresentation, or knowing failure or refusal to provide important information in connection with the sale or advertisement of real estate is illegal in New Jersey (**N.J.S.A. 56:8-2**). An aggrieved consumer may sue for triple damages plus attorney's fees for consumer fraud (**N.J.S.A. 56:8-19**). A tenant may contact the Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs, Office of Consumer Protection, 124 Halsey Street, Newark, New Jersey 07101, (973) 504-6200, https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov for further information concerning the Consumer Fraud Act.

Credit Checks and Background Checks

Landlords may access credit reports for prospective tenants from credit bureaus or tenant screening agencies. The landlord may use the information provided in deciding whether to approve or deny an applicant. If a tenant's application is denied due their credit report, the landlord must provide the tenant with the name, address, and telephone number of the credit reporting or screening agency that supplied the negative report (**15 U.S.C.A. § 1681m**). The landlord is allowed to charge the tenant for the cost of the report. The landlord may also request reasonable rental application fees or employment verification. For more information about the Fair Credit Reporting Act, call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357), or visit their website at www.ftc.gov. Landlords may also perform background checks through public records.

Furthermore, landlords may attempt to verify the validity of any information a tenant provides on his or her rental application.

Rent

A tenant has the responsibility to pay the full amount of rent on time. An owner has the responsibility to maintain the dwelling in a habitable condition.

A tenant who remains in a unit after giving his or her landlord written notice of intent to leave may be held responsible for double the rent payments for the months that the tenant continues to occupy the unit without a lease. The payment of double rent payments shall continue to be paid during the time period in which the tenant continues in possession of the premises after giving written notice of intention to leave the premises (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-5**). The amount due and owing to the landlord is recoverable by any action in any court of competent jurisdiction (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-6**).

Any senior citizen receiving a Social Security Old Page Pension, a Railroad Retirement Pension, or any other governmental pension in lieu of a Social Security Old Age Pension, and any recipients of Social Security Disability Benefits, Supplemental Security Income, or benefits under Work First New Jersey, must be given a period of five (5) business days grace period for payment when the rent is due on the first of the month. No delinquency or late charge may be assessed during the grace period. Any landlord who fails to allow this grace period may be criminally prosecuted as a disorderly person (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-6.1 to -6.3**).

Rent Control/Rent Increases

The State of New Jersey has no laws that establish, govern or control rents. Municipalities may pass an ordinance establishing rent control or rent leveling. Locally created boards enforce these ordinances. Rent control ordinances have been upheld as a valid exercise of the municipal police power where there is a housing shortage (**Iganamort v. Borough of Fort Lee, 120 N.J. Super. 286 (1973); Helmsley v. Borough of Fort Lee, 78 N.J. 200 (1978); Orange Taxpayers Council, Inc. v. City of Orange, 83 N.J. 246 (1980)**)

Under the Newly Constructed Multiple Dwellings Law (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-84.5)**, newly constructed multiple dwellings shall be exempt from any local rent control ordinances for a period of 30 years following completion of construction of the building. Rents that are subsidized by governmental funding may also be exempt from local rent control ordinances. A tenant may contact the Rent Control Board or municipal clerk in their town to find out if their rental unit is covered by a rent control or rent leveling ordinance.

Although the State of New Jersey does not have any laws that establish, govern, or control rents, a landlord can increase rents if they follow certain procedures. A landlord cannot raise the rent mid-lease term. The old lease must be terminated, and the new lease must have the increased rental payment. The landlord has to offer the tenant a new lease with the increased rent once the old lease has been terminated. In order to terminate a lease, the landlord must take the following steps (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(f)**):

1. Landlord must give the tenant proper written notice, which informs the tenant that the current lease is terminated, and the tenant can remain in the premises by signing a new lease at an increased rent.
2. Written notice must also state that end of the current lease, tenant has the right to continue renting the premises at the increased rent.

Notice requirements for rent increases are contained in the Anti-Eviction Act (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1 et seq.**). This law provides that before an owner can evict a tenant for nonpayment of an increased rent, they must first serve the tenant with a valid notice to quit and notice of rent increase. This notice does not mean that the tenant must actually leave; the tenant has the right to remain as long as they pay any legal increase in rent. The increase in rent must not be unconscionable; it must not be so unreasonable as to shock the conscience of a fair and honest person and must comply with any municipal ordinances governing rent increases.

The definition of unconscionable is fact sensitive. Factors used in defining unconscionable are the amount of the increase; the landlord's expenses and profitability; how the existing and proposed rent compared to rents charged at similar rental properties in the same geographic area; the relative bargaining position of the parties; and the Judge's general knowledge (**Fromet Properties v. Buel, 294 N.J. Super. 601 (App. Div. 1996); Hale v. Farrakhan, 390 N.J. Super. 335 (App. Div. 2007)**).

If an increase is determined to be unconscionable or a tenant has not received proper notice, the tenant may file a complaint with a municipal rent control board where one exists. Where there is no municipal rent control and a rent increase is charged that a tenant does not pay on the ground that it is unconscionable, the landlord may file an eviction action for non-payment of the rent increase. A judge would decide if the increase was unconscionable or not. If the court finds that the rent increase is not unconscionable or in violation of a rent control ordinance, the tenant will have to pay the increase in order to avoid being evicted.

If a building is converted to a condominium or cooperative form of ownership, or to fee simple ownership of units, rents may not be increased to cover costs resulting solely from the conversion (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.31**). This does not mean that rents may not be increased to cover the cost of new services or amenities. This prohibition applies to all tenants in the building regardless of whether they are eligible for protected tenancy as senior citizens or disabled persons.

Public Financed and Subsidized Housing

Housing developments owned or subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as unsubsidized developments with HUD-insured mortgages determined by HUD to have certain economic problems, are not subject to municipal rent control. For further information on the proper notice of a rent increase (the allowable amount of each rent increase in HUD buildings), contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New Jersey State Office, 1 Newark Center, Newark, New Jersey 07102-5260, (973) 622-7900. Likewise, rents fixed and controlled by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) in projects it finances are not subject to municipal rent control ordinances. For further information on the proper notice of a rent increase or the allowable amount of rent increase in a NJHMFA project, contact the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, 637 South Clinton Ave., Post Office Box 18550, Trenton, New Jersey 08650-2085, (609) 278-7400.

Property Tax Rebate for Tenants

The Tenants' Property Tax Rebate Act (**N.J.S.A. 54:4-6.2 to – 6.13; N.J.A.C. 5:33-3.1 et seq.**), as amended in 1998, may require owners of properties with five (5) or more rental units to pass on to their tenants as a rent credit or cash rebate, the full amount of any current property tax reduction. Reductions are calculated by comparing the current year's taxes with a previous year (beginning with 1998) that shows a larger tax amount. The difference is the amount to be rebated to tenants. Municipalities with rent control ordinances that do not permit landlords to pass tax increases along to tenants are not subject to the law. The law also contains exceptions for certain types of rental properties. See **N.J.S.A. 54:4-6.3** for the list of the types of properties that are exempt.

In each municipality, where a rebate is due, a notice of property tax reduction (**N.J.S.A. 54:4-6.7**) is sent from the local tax collector to the building owners within 30 days after tax bills are issued to the building owner. Generally, rebates are to be distributed in monthly installments at rent payment dates, beginning within 30 days after receipt of Notice of Tax Reduction. The first rebate is to be cumulative from January and all are to be completed by December 31. However, if the notice is received after November 1, the rebate is to be completed by June 30 of the following year.

Under the law, in eligible municipalities, a property rebate is due to tenants only when property taxes are reduced because of: 1) a municipal wide revaluation of all real estate and only in the first year the revaluation takes effect, 2) generally, when the property tax rate in the current year is lower than the base year (usually 1998), 3) taxpayers in the municipality receive tax rate credit through the Regional Efficiency Aid Program (REAP) (**N.J.S.A. 54:4-8.76 et seq.**). The entire amount of the REAP credit must be passed through to tenants.

The law and rules contain details on eligibility and other issues beyond what is covered in this publication. For additional information, please direct all questions about the program to the Tenant Property Tax Rebate Program, Division of Local Government Services, P.O. Box 803, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0803, (609) 984-5076, or via e-mail at dlgs@dca.nj.gov, or on the website at www.nj.gov/dca. The program also has a handbook titled "Tenant and Landlord Guide to the Tenant Property Tax Rebate Act," which can be obtained at no cost by writing or e-mailing the above address.

New Jersey Homestead Property Tax Credit

Residential tenants may be eligible for a tax credit under the Homestead Property Tax Credit Act, if they were tenants during the year for which the tax return is filed. In order to qualify, applicants must meet income eligibility requirements. This is not a credit on rent payments and is not paid by or through the landlord. The benefit is paid through the New Jersey Division of Taxation. The homestead benefit may come in the form of a rebate or credit. Tenants may apply for a homestead rebate or credit by filling out the application on the New Jersey Gross Income Tax Form. This form must be filed by April 15th of each year with the New Jersey Division of Taxation. Even tenants who are not required to file a return for income taxes may still apply for the credit. Questions concerning this credit should be directed to the New Jersey Division of Taxation,

Taxpayers Information Service, 50 Barrack Street, Post Office Box 269, Trenton, NJ 08646, (609) 292-6400 or (800) 323-4400. (See Homestead Property Tax Credit Act, N.J.S.A. 54:4-8.57 through 8.75).

Identity of Landlord

A landlord who owns a one or two-family non-owner-occupied home is required by law to file a registration statement with the clerk of the municipality in which the building is located. If the building has three (3) or more units, the statement must be filed with the Bureau of Housing Inspection, Post Office Box 810, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0810, on a registration form provided by the Bureau. The Bureau sends a validated copy of the filed registration form to the municipal clerk. Owner-occupied two-family homes are not required to be registered. The landlord registration law prohibits a landlord from evicting a tenant in the building if the landlord has not been properly registered (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-27 to -37**).

The registration statement must be given in writing to each tenant and posted in a place in the building where it can be easily seen. The document must state the date of preparation and contain the names and addresses of the following: 1) the owner or owners of the building and the owners of the rental business if not the same person; 2) the registered agent and corporate officers if the owner is a corporation; 3) a person who resides in or has an office in the same county as the building and is authorized to accept service of process, if the owner is not located in the county; 4) the managing agent; 5) regular maintenance personnel; 6) the owner's representative who must be available and able to act in an emergency (the representative's telephone number must be listed); 7) every holder of a recorded mortgage on the building; 8) if fuel oil is used to provide heat to the building and it is furnished by the owner, the name, and address of the fuel oil dealer and the grade of oil used must also be included (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-28**).

Every landlord required to file a certificate of registration must file an amended registration with the correct agency (Bureau of Housing Inspection or clerk of the municipality) within 20 days after any changes to the information on the certificate. No fee shall be charged for filing an amendment except where ownership of the property has changed, (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-28.2**). Amended registration statements must also be posted in the building and each tenant must be notified in writing within seven (7) days after filing the amended statement. In any eviction action by a landlord who has failed to follow the provisions of this law, the court is required by law to reserve judgement and continue the case – that is, to keep the case open and not issue a judgement for eviction – for up to 90 days to allow the landlord time to comply. If the landlord has not-complied within the allotted time, the court must dismiss the case, which means that the tenant is not evicted.

The Superior Court, Law Division, Special Civil Part and the municipal court in the municipality in which the premises are located have concurrent jurisdiction to enforce penalties sought against landlords who violate the requirements of the Landlord Identity law. The maximum penalty is $500.00 for each offense, recoverable by a summary proceeding under "The Penalty Enforcement Law" (**N.J.S.A 2A:58-1 et seq.**). The Attorney General, the municipality in which the premises are located, or any other person may institute the summary proceeding. The court will remit any penalty recovered to the municipality in which the subject premises is located unless the

action is brought by the Attorney General, in which case the penalty is remitted to the State (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-35**).

Habitability

Many citizens in the State reside in dwelling units that fail to meet minimum standards of safety and sanitation. All units shall be maintained as so to be fit for human use and habitation and to prevent progressive deterioration of the unit to the detriment of the health, safety, and well-being of its occupants. Both landlords and tenants have certain obligations for maintenance of these dwelling units. These obligations are based on lease provisions, New Jersey Statutes, local municipal ordinances, and court decisions, and require that proper and timely notice be given by the tenant to the landlord where there are safety and sanitation conditions that must be corrected.

Tenants have the right to safe, sanitary, and decent housing. Residential leases carry an implied warranty of habitability. The New Jersey Supreme Court has held that a landlord offering two units or more for rent implies that it is habitable and agrees to keep it in that condition. Upon terminating the lease, a tenant is responsible for maintaining and returning the property to the landlord in the same condition that the tenant received it, except for normal wear and tear. When damage has been caused by malicious or abnormal use by the tenant, the tenant is responsible for the repair **(Marini v. Ireland, 56 N.J. 130 (1970); Dowler v. Boczkowski, 148 N.J. 512 (1997))**.

Reporting Housing Code Violations:

All buildings with three or more rental units must comply with the regulations for the maintenance of Hotels and Multiple Dwellings and must be registered with the Bureau of Housing Inspection (BHI) in the Department of Community Affairs. BHI is responsible for the Statewide enforcement of the Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law and the regulations for maintenance of Hotel and Multiple Dwellings (**N.J.S.A. 55:13A-1 et seq.**).

To file a complaint against a landlord, for housing code violations contact the Bureau of Housing Inspection at (609) 633-6241. Multiple dwellings are to be inspected for violations in the following manner: inspection will be scheduled on a seven, five, or two-year schedule depending on the number of violations and abatements on the property. Under this tiered system inspections will take place as follows: (1) Every seven years when no violations are found or all violations are abated before the first reinspection; (2) Every five years in dwellings where all violations are abated by the second or third reinspection; (3) Every two years in dwellings where all violations are not abated by the third reinspection. The law also requires that the owner of each multiple dwelling of three or more units must file a certificate of registration. Once the certificate of registration is obtained, it must be prominently placed in a conspicuous site on the property. This certificate of registration must be filed annually. Should the information change, the owner must file an amended registration statement. Violation of this law can result in a $200.00 penalty per violation (**N.J.S.A. 55-13A-12(d)**). One- and two-unit buildings that are not owner-occupied must comply with any applicable local ordinances and must register with the Clerk in the municipality in which the residential property is located. No registration is required for owner-occupied two-family houses.

The Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law gives the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs power to issue and enforce regulations and to levy penalties to ensure that multiple dwellings are maintained so that they do not endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the tenants or the general public. Both landlords and tenants must maintain buildings so that there is no violation of these regulations. Tenants must take care of their units and report any code violations to the landlord or superintendent and upon one-day notice, shall allow the landlord or his representative to enter the unit to make any inspections, repairs, or alterations required in order to meet code requirements. In case of an emergency, immediate access shall be granted. The landlord must keep the property in good repair, clean, free of infestation and free of any hazards or nuisances that might be harmful to the health or safety of the occupants, and must provide basic maintenance, including heat, building security, smoke alarm systems or detectors, and properly functioning plumbing and electrical systems, etc. (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-5.1**).

Child-Protection Window Guards/Screens

This requirement does not apply to seasonal rental units (units rented from May 1 to October 1 each year). Nor does this requirement apply to owner-occupied units, condominiums and co-ops (**N.J.S.A. 55:13A-7.13(a)1 to –(b)2**).

Leases must contain a notice advising tenants that, upon written request by the tenant, the owner is required to provide, install, and maintain window guards in dwelling units with children 10 years of age or younger. In addition, bi-annual written notices must be given to tenants informing them of the window guard regulation. Furthermore, landlords must give first-floor tenants notice that they may also request window guards to protect the safety of their children, if the windows are more than six feet above ground or if there are other hazardous conditions that make the installation of the window guards necessary (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-27.1(c) to –(d)**). By law the landlord may charge a tenant no more than twenty dollars ($20.00) for each window guard installed in the tenant's apartment **(N.J.A.C. 5:10-27 Appx. 27B)**.

Screens suited to protect the interior of the building against insects must be provided and kept in good repair for each exterior door, except exterior doors which do not provide ventilation. Screens shall also be provided, maintained and installed for each openable window in living and common areas. Screens are not required for units or common areas on the 6th floor or above.

Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors

Both one- and two-household dwellings as well as living space in hotels and multiple dwellings must be equipped with smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. In the case of one- and two-family houses the requirement is enforced upon any change in occupancy or any time a permit is required for work being undertaken (**N.J.S.A. 52:27D-192**). An owner of a one- or two-family house must obtain a Certificate of Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector Alarm Compliance from the local fire official responsible for the enforcement of the Uniform Fire Safety Act. The requirement is enforced by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs under the Regulations for the Maintenance of Hotels and Multiple Dwellings with respect to multiple dwellings (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-28.1**).

No carbon monoxide alarm is required in any building that does not contain any fuel-burning appliances and does not have an attached garage. The enforcing agency may issue a certificate for a seasonal rental unit for a period of 12 months, regardless of the number or frequency of changes in tenancy (**N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.3, 2.9, & 4.19**).

At the request of a tenant who is deaf or hearing impaired and residing in a multiple dwelling or rooming and boarding house, the landlord must provide and install a visual alarm type carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector for that unit or, in the case of a rooming or boarding house resident, for the resident's sleeping area. The tenant should make his or her request in writing to the landlord (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-28.1, 5:27-14.1, 5:70-4.9**).

Locks

For a dwelling unit to be insurable, it must be equipped with locks that meet the federal standards as described below. State law requires that every landlord of a multiple dwelling equip the building with locks meeting federal standards. These standards are the same as those required under the New Jersey Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Regulations.

The regulations call for each exterior doorway to be protected by a door which, if not a sliding door, is equipped with a deadbolt lock using either an interlocking vertical bolt and striker, or a minimum ½-inch throw deadbolt, or a minimum ½-inch throw self-locking latch. For further information on locks, write to the Code Administrator for the county the building is in, Bureau of Housing Inspection, Department of Community Affairs, P.O. Box 810, Trenton, NJ 08625-0810, (609) 633-6225. In buildings of fewer than three (3) units, the tenant should contact the municipal building inspector or health officer for enforcement of any existing local ordinances (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-19.2**).

State Heat and Utility Requirements

The Hotel and Multiple Dwelling regulations establish heating standards for buildings with three (3) or more units. For buildings with fewer than three (3) units, tenants need to contact their municipal building or health offices for enforcement of local ordinances regarding heating. Every unit or dwelling space must have a heating system that will provide and maintain heat at least 68 degrees F. from October 1 to May 1, from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 65 degrees F. at other hours, supplying the required fuel or energy, and maintained the heating system in good condition so that it can provide the required amount of heat. However, a landlord and a tenant may agree that the tenant will supply heat to a dwelling unit when the unit is served by separate heating equipment and the source of that heat can be separately computed and billed (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-14.4**). To file a complaint pertaining to heating and utilities from anywhere in the State of New Jersey, contact the Bureau of Housing Inspection at (609) 633-6241.

The State Board of Public Utilities (BPU) enforces regulations that prohibit utility companies from shutting off utilities in tenant-occupied buildings whose owners have failed to make payments until tenants have been given notice and an opportunity to agree to make future payments (**N.J.A.C. 14:3-3A5 to -3A:8**). The office of the BPU is located at 44 S. Clinton Avenue, Post Office Box 350, Trenton, NJ 08625, (609) 777-3300.

The Board of Public Utilities also handles complaints regarding diversion of service. The utility company that provides service to the rental property will provide an application for requesting a diversion of service investigation. There is no cost to have the investigation performed. If the investigation reveals that a tenant is being billed for service used by another, the landlord will be contacted to have the problem corrected. For the Utility Residential Customer's Bill of Rights, please visit https://www.state.nj.us/bpu/assistance/rights/. The Utility Residential Customer's Bill of Rights is a concise, plain language explanation of the BPU regulations as set forth in **N.J.A.C. 14:3-1.1 et seq.**

For emergency action in the event of failure to provide required heat, a tenant can contact the local health officer immediately after giving, or attempting to give, notice to the landlord. When the heating equipment in a residential unit fails and the landlord does not take appropriate action after receiving proper notice form the tenant, the local board of health may act as an agent for the landlord and order the repairs necessary to restore the equipment to operating conditions (**N.J.S.A. 26:3-31(p)**).

Rent Receivership for Substandard Housing and Diversion of Utilities

In the event that a dwelling unit fails to meet minimum standards of safety and sanitation, the Rent Receivership Law permits the public officer of a municipality or tenant(s) of a dwelling to petition the court for a judgment directing the deposit of rents with the court and the appointment of an administrator who must use the money to correct the unsafe conditions (rent receiver) (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-85 to -95**).

If a tenant's utility service has been wrongfully diverted by the owners or some other party without the consent of the tenant, and the charges are being billed to the tenant whose services have been diverted, and the landlord has been notified by a public officer, the tenant or a utility company, and the landlord has failed to take necessary action to correct the wrongful diversion within 30 days of receipt of the notice, the tenant may file a complaint in Superior Court for Rent Receivership (to deposit rent money with the court until the problem is corrected) or in Small Claims Court. The notice to the landlord regarding the wrongful diversion should be sent by certified mail (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-87**).

Multifamily Housing Preservation and Receivership

Any interested party may bring a court action to have a receiver appointed for multifamily buildings which are substandard and deteriorating. Interested parties should file a complaint in Superior Court in the county in which the building is located to have a receiver appointed to take charge and manage the building. Any receiver appointed will be under the direction and control of the court. In order for the building to be eligible for receivership it must meet one of the following criteria (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-117**):

1. The building is in violation of any State or municipal code to such an extent as to endanger the health and safety of the tenants as of the date of the filing of the complaint with the court, and the violation(s) have persisted, unfixed for at least 90 days; or

2. The building is the site of a clear and convincing pattern of recurrent code violations, which may be shown by proofs that the building has been cited for such violations at least 4 separate times within the prior 12 months or 6 separate times within the preceding 2 years and the owner has failed to take action.

Public Housing Maintenance

Public Housing Authority leases must contain the rights and responsibilities of both the Housing Authority and the tenant in the event there is extensive damage to a property and conditions are created that are hazardous to life, health, or safety of the occupants. A Public Housing Authority lease must include a provision for standard alternative accommodations, if available, where necessary repairs cannot be accomplished within a reasonable time period. For more information regarding public housing leases you may contact the, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (HUD), New Jersey State Office, 1 Newark Center, Attn: Public Housing, Newark, N.J. 07102-5260, (973) 622-7900.

Federal Lead-Based Paint Disclosure

Under rules adopted jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1994, landlords of certain types of buildings must notify prospective tenants of lead-based paint hazards in the dwelling they wish to rent and provide them with information about the identification and control of such hazards. More specifically, if the dwelling to be rented was constructed prior to 1978, contains bedrooms and is to be rented for more than 100 days, the landlord must provide the tenant, before the lease is signed, an EPA pamphlet entitled, "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home" (**42 U.S.C.S. § 4851 et al.**).

In addition, the landlord must ensure that the lease agreement includes a federal disclosure form. On the form, the landlord must state whether they are aware of the presence of any lead-based paint or lead based hazards in the property. If the landlord has a lead evaluation report of the property, the report must be attached to the form.

The federal regulations only require landlords to disclose known lead hazards. They do not require landlords to conduct any investigations to determine whether there are lead-based paint hazards in their rental properties. Therefore, the fact that the landlord is unaware of a lead hazard does not mean that one does not exist. Lead-based paint hazards may still be present and, if they are, young children residing in those buildings are at risk of childhood lead poisoning.

Housing for the elderly or persons with disabilities are exempt from the lead paint disclosure requirement unless a child under the age of six (6) resides with the tenants. For specific questions about childhood lead poisoning or single copies of the pamphlet titled, "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home," forms and rules, call the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) at (800) 424-5323 (LEAD). Requests can be faxed to (585) 232-3111, and information can also be found on the HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes website, which is: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes. Noncompliance with the guide include civil and administrative penalties.

For bulk copies of the "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home" (Stock number 055-000-00507) pamphlet, call (202) 512-1800.

State Lead-Based Paint Disclosure

Multiple Dwellings and one- and two-family tenant occupied residential buildings, including all common areas, constructed before 1978, are required to undergo a combined inspection and risk assessment, and lead hazard control work, or periodically treat the property for lead-based paint hazards. However, this rule does not apply to the following: a dwelling unit that has been certified as having a lead-free interior; an owner-occupied dwelling unit; a seasonal dwelling unit which is rented for less than 6 months' duration each year; or housing for the elderly or a residential property designed exclusively for persons with disabilities, unless a child less than six (6) years of age is expected to reside in the dwelling unit. The owner must post a notice advising tenants to report deteriorated paint and shall respond to any reported problem within 30 days. The notice shall include the landlord's name, address, and telephone number, however, the landlord shall respond to any report of deteriorated paint within one week if there is a pregnant woman or child under the age of six (6) in the unit or if the problem is in a common area (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-6.6(h)2(i)**). The Bureau of Housing Inspection is responsible for the inspection of multiple dwellings for compliance with the state lead paint requirements.

Tenant notification and landlord response requirements are as follows: Landlords shall distribute the pamphlet for Lead Safe Maintenance prior to commencement of repair work that will disturb more than two (2) square feet of lead-based paint, unless the tenant has received the pamphlet within the past 12 months (**N.J.A.C. 5:10-6.6(h)1**). The pamphlet may be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Housing Inspection, P.O. Box 810, Trenton, N.J. 08625, (609) 633-6225 or at www.nj.gov/dca/codes.

Occupants will not be permitted to enter the worksite during hazard reduction activities and will be temporarily relocated to a safe and similarly assessible dwelling unit, unless the treatment will not cause a hazard. The occupant's belongings must also be moved from the contaminated area or protected by an impermeable covering. A warning sign shall be posted at each entry to a room where hazard reduction activities are conducted when occupants are present; or at each main and secondary entryway to a building form which occupants have been relocated (**24 C.F.R. 35.1345**).

A local board of health has the authority to order the removal of lead paint from the interior of a dwelling unit when it causes a danger to occupants.

Post of Drinking Water Test Results

1. Public Water Systems:

Public water systems are defined as those having at least 15 service connections or regularly serve an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days or more out of the year (**N.J.S.A. 58:12A-3**).

The landlord of a multiple dwelling who is required to prepare a Consumer Confidence Report pursuant to the "Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996," (**42 U.S.C.S. § 300f et al.**), or who receives a Consumer Confidence Report from the owner or operator of a public community water system, shall post each Consumer Confidence Report it prepares or receives in each common area routinely used by tenants living in a multiple dwelling unit or, if there is no common area routinely used by tenants, the landlord of the multiple dwelling unit must transmit a copy of the Consumer Confidence Report to each dwelling unit.

The landlord of a multiple dwelling unit who is a supplier of water but is not required to prepare a Consumer Confidence Report pursuant to the "Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996," and who is required to conduct tests of its drinking water by the Department of Environmental Protection, must post a chart setting forth the results of the water tests, including the level of detection and, as appropriate for each contaminant, the maximum containment level, highest level allowed, action level, treatment technique, or other expression of an acceptable level, for each contaminant, in each common area routinely used by the tenants living in a multiple dwelling unit, or if there is no common area routinely used by the tenant, the owner of the multiple dwelling unit must transmit a copy of the chart to each dwelling unit. The chart also must include in bold print the statement required to be included in a Consumer Confidence Report, pursuant to **40 C.F. R. 141.154(a)**.

2. Private Water Systems:

Private water systems are defined as any water system that does not meet the definition of a public water system.

The Private Well Testing Act (**N.J.S.A. 58:12A-26 et seq.**) requires private potable wells to be tested in accordance with the law. All landlords of property supplied by a private potable well must provide a copy of the test results to all tenants of the property. Testing is required at least once every five (5) years. The landlord is required to provide a copy of new test results to each rental unit within 30 days of receiving those results. Any new tenant of a rental unit is to be provided a written copy of the most recent test results by the landlord (**N.J.S.A. 58:12A-32**). The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will notify local health authorities of failed well tests. For further information or questions about the Private Well Testing Act, contact the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), 401 East State Street, Post Office Box 426, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0426, (609) 292-5550.

Remedies if the landlord fails to maintain the property in a habitable condition

1. Repair and Deduct

If the landlord does not keep the premises in a habitable condition, a tenant may repair any vital deficiencies and deduct the amount of the repair from the rent. The landlord's failure to maintain the property could also lead to what is called a constructive eviction by the tenant (see below for explanation). The tenant may seek rent abatement (a reduction in rent) or withhold the rent or a portion of the rent if the property is not habitable (**Marini v. Ireland, 56 N.J. 130 (1970); Dowler v. Boczkowski, 148 N.J. 512 (1997)**)

Before applying the remedies of repair and deduct, constructive eviction, rent abatement, or withholding the rent or a portion of the rent, the following must apply:

1. The defect must be of a "vital facility." Vital facilities are those items necessary to make the rental unit habitable. Example of defects of vital facilities include broken toilets, no hot or cold water, lack of heat or electricity, broken windows, or air conditioning.
2. The tenant must not have caused the condition.
3. The tenant must have notified the landlord that the deficient condition existed and allowed the landlord adequate time to fix the defect. ***Notice to the landlord should be given by the tenant in writing and by certified mail, return receipt requested.***

A maintenance problem that does not threaten residents' safety, or does not affect habitability, does not provide a basis for rent withholding or repair and deduct. Rent withholding was authorized when the New Jersey Supreme Court held that the obligation of a tenant to pay rent and the obligation, (whether written or not) on the part of a landlord to maintain the property in a livable condition are mutually dependent (**Berzito v. Gambino Rental Abatement, 114 N.J. Super. 124 (1971), 63 N.J. 460 (1973); Housing Authority of City of Newark v. Scott, 137 N.J. Super. 110 (App. Div. 1975)**).

The New Jersey Supreme Court has permitted the self-help remedy of "repair and deduct." A landlord promises at the beginning of a lease that the vital facilities needed to make the dwelling unit livable are in good condition and the property will be maintained. When there are defects in the vital facilities, a tenant must first notify the landlord of the situation and allow a reasonable amount of time for the landlord to make repairs or replacements. If a landlord fails to take action, a tenant may have the repairs made and deduct the cost from future rent. However, a landlord may still take a tenant to court for nonpayment of rent. As a defense, the tenant would have to prove the presence of defects, the failure of the owner to act despite having received reasonable notice, and the need to make repairs. In the event the matter goes to court, the tenant will very likely be required to deposit the full amount of the rent with the court. If there is a finding in favor of the landlord, in most cases, the unpaid rent must be paid by the end of the court day to avoid eviction.

If there are defects in the vital facilities and the landlord has not repaired them after receiving proper and timely notice from the tenant, the tenant may either seek a decrease in rent by court action or simply withhold rent. A landlord may bring an eviction action for nonpayment of rent. As a defense, the tenant must prove the necessity to make repairs and the failure of the landlord to act despite having received reasonable notice. To avoid possible eviction in the event the court finds in favor of the landlord, the tenant should save the amount of money withheld so that he will be able to pay it if ordered by the judge. It is advisable to set up a separate bank account for this purpose.

As to air conditioning, the Superior Court, Appellate Division has held that air conditioning that is part of the original tenancy may be considered a "vital facility," and air conditioning failure affects the habitability of the premises.

2. Constructive eviction – Constructive eviction occurs when a tenant breaks the lease without penalties because the landlord is guilty of neglect or default, which makes the premises unsafe,

unfit, or unsuitable for occupancy. **Reste Realty v. Cooper, 53 N.J. 444 (1969)**, established the foundation for constructive eviction. If a tenant invokes the remedy of constructive eviction, and the landlord is found to be negligent in maintaining the rental unit, the tenant is entitled to the return of the security deposit and is not responsible for the rent for the balance of the lease or the cost of re-renting the property.

3. Rent abatement (reduction) – Upon entering into a lease, the tenant's promise to pay rent and the landlord's warranty of habitability are interdependent. In **Berzito v. Gambino, 63 N.J. 460 (1973)**, the court held that a tenant claiming that the landlord did not maintain the property in a habitable condition may initiate an action to recover all or part of the deposit paid when the lease was finalized or all of the rent paid. If the court finds that the landlord did not maintain the property in a habitable condition, the tenant will be charged only with the reasonable rental value of the property in its imperfect condition during the tenancy.

4. Withholding the rent or a portion of the rent – If the landlord breaches his obligation of maintaining the property at an adequate standard of habitability, a tenant may withhold the rent or a portion of the rent to be used as a set-off, because of the deficient condition. If the landlord institutes an eviction proceeding for non-payment of rent, the tenant is entitled to use the landlord's breach of obligation to provide a habitable residence as a defense and justification for the set-off (deduction of rental payment) (**Marini v. Ireland, 56 N.J. 130 (1970)**)

5. Rent Receivership – The law promoting safe and sanitary housing for tenants of substandard dwellings (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-85 et seq.**) was enacted after the **Berzito** decision. The law authorizes tenants in substandard dwelling units to deposit their rents with a court-appointed administrator for use in remedying defective conditions. If there is a difference in the market value of the premises in its defective condition and the amount of rent that the tenant paid to the court administrator, the tenant may be entitled to a rent abatement and may only be charged the reasonable rental value of the property in its imperfect condition. To use this remedy, a tenant or housing inspector may file a complaint in the court of the municipality in which the property is located.

Note: Not every defect or inconvenience is considered a breach of the warranty of habitability. Each case must be judged on its own facts. To avoid eviction, any rent withheld by the tenant should be saved and accessible in case the court requires the tenant to pay the outstanding rent.

In emergency situations created by the landlord or resulting from his negligence, the landlord may be responsible to bear a tenant's expenses in obtaining alternative housing during the emergency. Expenses may be deducted from the rent. However, the expenses must be reasonable.

Flood Plain Notification Requirement

If the rental property has been determined to be located in a flood zone or area, the landlord must notify each new tenant prior to prior to lease signing or renewal that the rental property is located in a flood zone or area. This notice is not required to be given in one- and two-unit residential buildings, or in an owner-occupied three-family dwelling, or in hotels, motels, or other guest housing serving transient or seasonal guests defined as those who rent a property for a period of less than 120 days.

This model notice can be found at https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/housing_assistance.shtml under the Landlord/Tenant link for "Landlord Floor Disclosure Notice" (**N.J.S.A. 46:8-50**).

Crime Insurance Information

Crime insurance is available through the New Jersey Insurance Underwriters Association, Crime Insurance Indemnity Plan. To apply for crime insurance, contact the New Jersey Insurance Underwriters Association, Crime Insurance for Habitable Property, 570 Broad Street, Post Office Box 32609, Newark, New Jersey, 07102, (973) 622-3838 directly for an application. This insurance is applicable to coverage from losses from theft and/or burglaries. A tenant may also purchase renter's insurance from a private insurance company to cover damages to his or her personal property. Please visit www.njiua.org for additional information on insurance coverage.

Eviction

The Anti-Eviction Act, **N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1 to 61.12**, was created to protect blameless tenants from eviction and was adopted in recognition of the housing shortage in the State. A landlord may recover possession of a dwelling unit used as a residence only by consent of the tenants or through the legal process of eviction. In an eviction action, when a landlord obtains a judgment of possession of the unit from a court, the landlord is entitled to a warrant for removal. This warrant will direct an officer of the court to remove all persons from the dwelling unit and give the landlord full possession. The warrant may also direct the officer of the court to remove the tenants' belongings. It is the landlord's responsibility to obtain the warrant for removal and have it enforced (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1**).

An eviction is an actual removal of a tenant from the premises. A landlord must have good cause to evict a tenant (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-53**). There are several grounds for a good cause eviction. Each cause, except for nonpayment of rent, must be described in detail by the landlord in a written notice to the tenant. A "Notice to Quit" is required for all good cause evictions, except for an eviction for nonpayment of rent (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.2**). A "Notice to Quit" is a notice given by the landlord terminating the tenancy and ordering the tenant to vacate the premises. However, a Judgment for Possession must be entered by the Court before the tenant is required to move. In some cases, a "Notice to Cease" may also be required. A "Notice to Cease" serves as a warning notice; this notice tells the tenant to stop the wrongful conduct. If the tenant does not comply with the "Notice to Cease," a "Notice to Quit" may be served on the tenant. There is no statutory time period for a "Notice to Cease," however, the period of time for a resident to comply with the notice must be reasonable under the circumstances (**Brunswick Street Assocs. v. Gerard, 357 N.J. Super. 598 (2002)**).

After serving a "Notice to Quit," on the tenant, the landlord may file suit for an eviction. If a suit for eviction is filed and the landlord wins his case, he may be granted a Judgment for Possession. A Judgment for Possession terminates the tenancy and allows the landlord to have the tenant evicted from the rental premises. No residential landlord may evict or fail to renew a lease, whether it is a written or an oral lease without good cause. The landlord must be able to prove in court that he has grounds for an eviction.

Applicability

The Anti-Eviction Act applies to most residential rental properties including single-family homes, mobile homes and land in a mobile home park, apartment buildings, and complexes. This law also applies to rooming and boarding homes (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-53 to -84**).

Exceptions

This law may not apply to two- or three-unit owner-occupied premises with two (2) or fewer rental units. It does not apply to hotel guests, motel guests, or guest houses rented to a transient guest or seasonal tenant. However, hotel and motel guests are covered under this law if, the occupant has no alternate residence and resides at the hotel or motel on a continual basis. Additionally, this law does not apply to a unit held in trust on behalf of a member of the immediate family, if that family member is developmentally disabled, and permanently occupies the dwelling unit.

Filing a Complaint for Eviction

An Eviction Action Complaint must be filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Special Civil Part in the county where the rental premises are located. A Landlord-Tenant complaint form (to be used by the landlord) is available from the Clerk of the Special Civil Part in the county where the rental premises are located.

Both the landlord and the tenant must appear at the court hearing. If the landlord or his attorney fails to appear, the complaint may be dismissed. If the tenant does not appear, a default judgment may be entered against the tenant allowing the landlord to evict the tenant from the premises.

Judgment for Possession

If the landlord is granted a judgment for possession, the landlord may apply to the Clerk of the Special Civil Part for a warrant for possession, which allows the landlord to force the tenant to move out of the premises. The warrant for possession may not be issued until three (3) business days after the judgment for possession is granted. The tenant has three (3) business days to move all persons and belongings from the premises. If the tenant does not move after three (3) business days from the time the warrant for possession was served on the tenant, the landlord may arrange for the Court Officer to have the tenant evicted or locked out (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-57**).

Following the eviction, the landlord must allow the tenant to remove their personal belongings from the premises. A landlord cannot keep the tenant's belongings but can arrange for their storage. A landlord must apply for a warrant for possession within 30 days from the date of the judgment for possession unless the judgment is vacated through a court order or other written agreement signed by the landlord and tenant.

A tenant may ask the court for permission to stay in the premises due to special circumstances that moving may cause. This action is a stay of eviction. If permission is granted, the tenant may not stay in the premises for more than one year, unless there is an agreed upon extension between landlord and tenant. All rent due ordinarily must be paid for permission to be granted by the court (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-59.1**).

"Self-help" Evictions

Self-help evictions occur when the landlord or someone acting on the landlord's behalf enters into the dwelling unit without the permission of the tenant and without a judgment from the Court and forces the tenant to move. A lockout occurs when the landlord padlocks the door or changes the locks while the tenant are not home and then refuses to allow the tenant back into the premises. A lockout also occurs when the landlord shuts off the utilities in attempt to force the tenant to move. Self-help evictions, or lockouts, made by the landlord are illegal in New Jersey.

If a landlord attempts a self-help eviction or lockout, the tenant should call the police. If the landlord refuses to allow the tenant back into the premises after the police have warned the landlord about the illegal procedures, the landlord may be charged with disorderly conduct.

"Self-help" eviction is entry into a dwelling unit and removal of tenants without their consent or without a judgment from a court, are not permitted in New Jersey under any circumstances**.** A landlord or any other person who enters an apartment or property without a court order authorizing such entry and/or holds a tenant's belongings unlawfully by force or threat of monies owed may be liable for damages to the tenant (**N.J.S.A. 2A:39-1**).

A landlord or their agent may not padlock, disconnect utilities or otherwise block entry to a rental premise while the tenant still lives there. Also, the removal of a tenant's belongings from a premise by a landlord after the eviction may be done only in accordance with the Abandoned Property Law, N.J.S.A. 2A:18-72 to 84, Only an officer of the court can legally physically evict a tenant, after a judge has issued a Warrant for Removal.

A person who is illegally evicted may file a complaint with the Clerk of the Landlord-Tenant Section, Special Civil Part of the Law Division, or the Chancery Division, of the Superior Court, in the county in which the act was committed. In a successful action by a tenant evicted through forcible entry and detainer, the court may award possession of the dwelling unit and all damages, including court costs and reasonable attorney fees. If the dwelling unit cannot be returned to the tenant as a result of the self-help eviction, the court may award damages.

Causes for Eviction

Listed below are the statutory grounds for eviction as set forth in the Anti-Eviction Statute.

A. Failure to Pay Rent

If a tenant fails to pay rent, the landlord may immediately take legal action to have the tenant evicted. The landlord is not required to give the tenant notice before filing an eviction suit, except if the tenant resides in federally subsidized housing. If the tenant resides in federally subsidized housing a 14-day notice must be given before filing a suite for eviction (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(a)**). *Note: A tenant may **not** be evicted for nonpayment of rent, if the tenant used the unpaid portion of rent to continue utility services to the rental premises after receiving notice that the services were in danger of being discontinued, and if the landlord was responsible for the payment of those utility services and did not make the payments required to retain the use of those services. These utilities include electric, gas, water, and sewer. The money used to pay for the continuance of those services shall be considered a portion of the rental payment.*

B. Disorderly Conduct

If after given written Notice to Cease disorderly conduct, the tenant continues the disorderly conduct and that conduct destroys the peace and quiet of the other tenants living in the building or neighborhood, the landlord may file a suite for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing a suit for eviction*** **(N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(b)).**

C. Damage or Destruction to the Property

The tenant may be evicted if they have intentionally or by reason of gross negligence caused or allowed destruction, damage, or injury to the property. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing a suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A.:2A-18-61.1(c)**).

D. Substantial Violation or Breach of the Landlord's Rules and Regulations

If after given a written Notice to Cease violating or breaching reasonable rules and regulations contained in the lease or accepted in writing by the tenant, the tenant continues to substantially violate or breach the rules and regulations, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least one month prior to filing the suit for eviction. In addition, any notices must be given on or before the start of a new month (*****N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(d)*****).***

E. Violation or Breach of Covenants or Agreements Contained in the Lease

1) If the tenant continues to substantially violate or breach the reasonable covenants or agreements contained in the lease, after given written Notice to Cease violating or breaching those covenants or agreements and if the landlord has reserved a right of re-entry in the lease, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least one month prior to filing the suit for this type of eviction.***

2) In public housing, if the tenant has substantially violated or breached any of the covenants or agreements contained in the lease, pertaining to illegal uses of controlled dangerous substances, or other illegal activities, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. The covenant or agreement must conform to federal guidelines and must have been in effect at the beginning of the lease term. The landlord does not have to give Notice to Cease the illegal activity before filing a Notice to Quit. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant in accordance with federal regulations pertaining to public housing (*****N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(e)*****).***

Note: A public housing authority may evict a tenant when a member of the tenant's household or guest engages in drug-related activity, even if the tenant did not know of the drug related activity. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker, 122 S.Ct. 1230 (2002).

F. Failure to Pay Rent Increase

If a tenant fails to pay rent after being given notice of a rent increase and a Notice to Quit, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. The rent increase must not be unconscionable and must comply with all other laws or municipal ordinances, including rent control. ***A Notice***

to Quit must be served on the tenant at least one month prior to filing the suit for eviction (*N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(f)*).

Note: If the tenant believes the rent increase is unconscionable, they may withhold a portion of the rent. They may withhold the difference between the old rent rate and the new increased rate. However, the landlord may file suit for eviction and the court would determine if the rent increase is unconscionable.

G. <u>Health and Safety Violation or Removal from the Rental Market</u>

A tenant may be evicted if the following conditions apply:

1) The landlord has been cited by an inspector and needs to board up or demolish the property because of substantial health and safety violations and because it is financially difficult to abate the violations.

2) The landlord needs to abate health and safety violations and it is not possible to do so, while the tenant resides at the property. In addition, upon request, the landlord must provide the Department of Community Affairs with information as required under the law, so that the Department may prepare a report informing all parties and the court of the feasibility of the landlord to abate the violations without removing the tenants from the property.

3) The landlord needs to correct an illegal occupancy and it is not possible to correct this violation without removing the tenant.

4) A governmental agency wants to permanently take the property off the rental market, so that it can redevelop or clear land in a blighted area (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(g)**).

A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three months before filing a suit for eviction. The tenant can't be evicted until relocation assistance is provided.

Note: Tenants evicted under this cause may be eligible for financial and other assistance for relocation. If eligible, this assistance must be provided before the tenant can be evicted. Information on relocation assistance can be obtained from the Relocation Assistance Program of the Division of Codes and Standards, P.O. Box 802, Trenton, New Jersey 08625, (609) 984-7609.

Any tenant evicted under G 3) (illegal occupancy) is entitled to relocation assistance in an amount equal to six times the tenant's monthly rent. The landlord is responsible for paying the tenant's relocation expenses. Any tenant who does not receive the required payment from the landlord at least five days prior to their removal from the premises, may receive payment from a revolving relocation assistance fund established by the municipality. The landlord will be required to repay the money to the municipality (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(g) or 2A:18-61.1(h); <u>Kona Miah v. Ahmed</u>, 179. N.J. 511 (2004)**).

However, if the municipality has not established a relocation assistance fund, and the landlord does not pay the relocation funds within the required time, interest will accrue on the unpaid balance at the rate of 18% per year until the amount due, including interest is paid in full to the tenant. The amount due to the tenant is a lien on the property.

The tenant may file a lien statement with the county clerk or registrar in order to enforce the lien (**N.J.A.C. 5:11-8.5(c)**).

H. <u>The Landlord Wants to Permanently Retire the Property from Residential Use</u>

If the landlord wants to permanently retire a building or mobile home park from residential use, provided the circumstances covered under section (G) above do not apply, the landlord may file suit for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least 18 months prior to filing the suit for eviction. No legal action may be taken until the lease expires*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(h)**).

I. <u>Refusal to Accept Reasonable Changes in the Terms and Conditions of the Lease</u>

When the lease expires, the landlord may propose reasonable but substantial changes to the terms and conditions of the lease. If after written notice the tenant refuses to accept those changes the landlord may file a suit for eviction and the court will determine if the proposed changes are reasonable. In cases where a tenant has received a notice of termination on any of the grounds listed in section (K) below, has a protected tenancy status pursuant to the "Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act," or pursuant to the "Tenant Protection Act of 1992," the landlord or owner shall have the burden of proof that any changes in the terms and conditions of the lease, rental, or regulations are reasonable and does not substantially reduce the rights and privileges that the tenant was entitled to prior to the conversion. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least one month before filing suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(i)**).

Note: The Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act protects qualifying tenants from changes in the terms of the tenancy or rent increases, which rests solely on the landlord's decision to convert the rental premises.

J. <u>Tenant Continuously Fails to Pay Rent or Habitually Pays Late</u>

If the tenant continuously fails to pay rent or habitually pays late, after written Notice to Cease, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least one month before filing a suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(j)**).

Note: The Courts have ruled that habitual late payments means more than one (1) late payment following the Notice to Cease. Also, the N.J. Supreme Court ruled that a landlord, after giving a tenant a notice to cease late payments, must continue to give the tenant reasonable and sufficient notice when accepting further late payments, that continued late payments from the tenant would result in an eviction action. If the landlord does not give this continued notice, the original Notice to Cease given to the tenant may be considered to be waived by the Court.

K. <u>Conversion to Condominium, Cooperative, or Fee Simple Ownership</u>

If the landlord or owner of a building or mobile home park is converting the property from the rental market to a condominium, cooperative, or fee simple ownership of two or more dwelling units or park sites, except as hereinafter provided in subsection (L) below, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. The landlord must comply with the regulations governing conversion to condominiums and cooperatives, before a warrant for possession shall be issued. Up to five, one-year stays of eviction shall be granted by the court if the

tenant has ***not*** been offered a reasonable opportunity to examine and rent comparable housing. However, not more than a one-year stay shall be granted if the landlord allows the tenant five months' free rent as compensation for hardship in relocation. No action for possession shall be brought against a senior citizen tenant or disabled tenant with protected tenancy status pursuant to the "Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act of 1992," as long as the agency has not terminated the protected tenancy status or the protected tenancy period has not expired. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three years before filing a suit for eviction. No legal action may be taken until the lease expires*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(k)**).

L. <u>Tenancy After Conversion to Condominium, Cooperative, or Fee Simple Ownership</u>

1) The landlord may file for eviction, if the owner of a building or mobile home park, which is constructed as or being converted to a condominium, cooperative or fee simple ownership, seeks to evict a tenant or sublessee whose initial tenancy began after the master deed, or agreement establishing the cooperative or subdivision plat was recorded, because the owner has contracted to sell the unit to a buyer who seeks to personally occupy it and the contract for sale calls for the unit to be vacant at the time of closing. However, no action shall be brought against a tenant under paragraph one (1) of this subsection unless the tenant was given a statement, informing the tenant that the property is being converted. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least two months prior to filing suit for eviction. No legal action may be taken until the lease expires.***

2) The landlord may file for eviction, if the owner of three or less condominium or cooperative units seeks to evict a tenant whose initial tenancy began, by rental, after the master deed or agreement establishing the cooperative was recorded, because the owner seeks to personally occupy the unit, or has contracted to sell the unit to a buyer who seeks to personally occupy it and the contract for sale calls for the unit to be vacant at the time of closing. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least two months prior to filing suit for eviction. No legal action may be taken until the lease expires.***

3) The landlord may file for eviction, if the owner of a building with three residential units or less seeks to personally occupy a unit, or has contracted to sell the residential unit to a buyer who wishes to personally occupy it and the contract for sale calls for the unit to be vacant at the time of closing. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least two months prior to filing suit for eviction. No legal action may be taken until the lease expires*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(l)**).

M. <u>Tenancy Based on Employment</u>

If a tenant resides in the property on the condition that, he is employed by the landlord as a superintendent, janitor, or in some other job and that employment is terminated the landlord may file a suit for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant three days prior to filing a suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(m)**).

N. <u>Conviction of a Drug Offense Committed on the Property</u>

The landlord may file a suit for eviction, if the tenant, including juveniles who have been found by the Court to be delinquent, has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to drug offenses that took place on the property, and has not in connection with his sentence either

(1) successfully completed or (2) been admitted to and continues during probation participation toward completion of a drug rehabilitation program. Also, if the tenant lets a person who has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to drug offenses, occupy the premises for residential purposes whether it is continuously or occasionally, the landlord may file for eviction. This does not apply to a tenant allowing a juvenile to reside at the property where the juvenile has been found to be delinquent due to use or possession of drugs. ***No eviction suit may be brought more than two years after: the juvenile was found to be delinquent; conviction of the person; of after the person's release from incarceration, whichever is later. A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(n)**).

O. <u>Conviction of Assaulting or Threatening the Landlord, The Landlord's Family, or Employees</u>

The landlord may file for eviction, if the tenant has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to, or if a juvenile has been found by the court to be delinquent due to an offense involving assault or terrorist threats against the landlord, a member of the landlord's family or an employee of the landlord. Also, if the tenant permits a person he knows has been convicted of or has pleaded guilty to these offenses to reside at the premises continuously or occasionally, the landlord may file a suit for eviction. ***No eviction suit may be brought more than two years after: the juvenile was found to be delinquent; conviction of the person; or after the person's release from incarceration, whichever is later. A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing a suit for*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A-18-61.1(o)**).

P. <u>Civil Court Action that Holds Tenant Liable for Involvement in Criminal Activities</u>

The landlord may file for eviction, if the tenant is found by a civil court proceeding (not criminal) to be liable for involvement in theft of property located on the premises, involvement in assaults or terrorist threats against the landlord, a member of the landlord's family or an employee of the landlord, or involved in illegal drug activities that takes place on the premises and that tenant has not in connection with his sentence for the drug offense either (1) successfully completed or (2) been admitted to and continues during probation participation towards completion of a drug rehabilitation program. Also, if the tenant permits a person he knows has been convicted of or has pleaded guilty to these actions, to reside at the premises continuously or occasionally, the landlord may file for eviction. This does not apply to a tenant allowing a juvenile to reside at the property where the juvenile has been found to be delinquent due to the use or possession of drugs. ***No eviction suit may be brought more than two years after: the juvenile was found to be delinquent; conviction of the person; or after the person's release from incarceration, whichever is later. A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(p)**).

Q. <u>Conviction for Theft of Property</u>

The landlord may file for eviction, if the tenant has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to, or if a juvenile has been found to be delinquent by the Court due to an offense involving theft of property from the landlord or from tenants residing in the same building or complex. Also, if the tenant permits a person he knows has been convicted of or has pleaded

guilty to these actions to reside at the premises continuously or occasionally, the landlord may file for eviction. ***A Notice to Quit must be served on the tenant at least three days prior to filing suit for eviction*** (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(q)**).

R. Conviction for Human Trafficking

The landlord may file for eviction, if the tenant in a civil action is found to have committed a violation of the human trafficking provisions set forth in section 1 of P.L. 2005, c.77 (**2C:13-8**) within or upon the leased premises, building, or complex of the building and land appurtenant thereto, or the mobile home park, in which those premises are located, or, being the tenant or lessee of such leased premises, knowingly harbors or harbored a person engaged in human trafficking, or permits or permitted such a person to occupy those premises for residential purposes, whether continuously or intermittently. No action for removal pursuant to this subsection may be brought more than two years after the alleged violation has terminated (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1(r)**).

Evictions for Owner-Occupied Two-and Three-Family Dwellings

Tenants of landlord-occupied two- and three-family dwellings can be removed only when a court issues an order for eviction. However, in these cases, the landlord must prove that the tenant (a) is staying after the expiration of the term of the lease, (b) is staying after a failure to pay rent, (c) is disorderly so as to destroy the peace and quiet of other tenants, (d) willfully destroys or damages the premises, (e) constantly violates the written rules and regulations or (f) violates any lease provision where the lease reserves a right of re-entry for such violations. A three (3) month notice to quit must be given if an at will tenancy or year-to-year tenancy exists. A one (1) month notice to quit is required for a month-to-month tenancy and other types of tenancies are entitled to a one (1) month notice to quit**.** No further notice is required before bringing action in court to evict in the case of a tenant staying after a failure to pay rent. A three-day written Notice to Quit is required for any of the causes described as disorderly, destructive or violative of written rules or lease provisions (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.2(a)).** In addition to the causes listed above, a tenant residing in an owner- occupied two- or three-family dwelling may be evicted if the landlord can show that the tenant is staying after the expiration of the lease and the landlord has given the tenant a written notice for delivery of possession of the property. Under this cause of not renewing the lease, a three-month notice to quit must be given if an at will tenancy or year-to year tenancy exists. A one-month notice to quit is required for a month-to-month tenancy.

Rooming and Boarding House Evictions

The Regulations Governing Rooming and Boarding Houses, which are enforced by the Bureau of Rooming and Boarding House Standards of the Department of Community Affairs, require owners of rooming and boarding houses to follow the good causes and notice requirements of the Eviction Law when evicting residents, except if otherwise ordered by the Bureau (**N.J.A.C. 5:27-3.3(c)**). There is a further requirement that the owner give at least three (3) working days' notice to the County Welfare Board before starting the eviction action for any resident (**N.J.A.C. 5:26-3.4(c)**).

Any building having at least two (2) living units occupied by persons unrelated to each other without private kitchens and bathrooms is a rooming or boarding house if it does not meet one (1) of the exceptions in the Rooming and Boarding House Act (**N.J.S.A. 55:13B-3**). These

exceptions include hotels with more than 85 percent temporary occupancy by people with homes elsewhere, school and college dormitories, buildings housing only college students and certain residences for the disabled. For additional information concerning rooming and boarding houses, contact the Bureau of Rooming and Boarding House Standards, Post Office Box 804, Trenton, NJ 08625-0804, (609) 633-6251 or (609) 984-1704.

Public Housing Evictions

Public housing authorities must follow State laws regarding evictions as well as the regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1; 24 C.F.R. 966 et seq.**). In the case of an eviction, a public housing tenant may request a hearing from the housing authority after receiving a notice of termination of tenancy. A housing authority may not begin an eviction action in court until the decision of the hearing officer or the hearing panel has been mailed or delivered to the tenant and a notice to vacate has been served**.**

Penalties for Eviction Law Violations

When a tenant vacates a dwelling unit after having been given notice that the landlord wishes to personally occupy the unit the landlord must occupy the unit for at least six (6) months. If instead the landlord permits personal occupancy of the unit by another tenant or registration of conversion of the property to a condominium or cooperative, the landlord is liable to the former tenant for three (3) times the damages suffered plus attorney fees and costs (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.6(a)**).

When a tenant vacates a dwelling unit after having been given notice that the landlord seeks to permanently board up or demolish the building or to permanently retire it from residential use, the landlord must not use this property for residential use for a period of five (5) years. If the landlord allows any residential use of the unit during the five (5) year period from the date the unit became vacant, the landlord, or the former landlord, may be liable to the tenant for three (3) times the damages plus attorney fees and costs. Additionally, the landlord or former landlord may be liable for a civil penalty up to $10,000.00 for each violation of this law and the property may not be registered as a planned real estate development during the five-year period following the date on which any dwelling unit in the property became vacant as a result of an eviction notice stating that the property was being permanently removed from residential use (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.6(c)**).

Reprisal - Civil Rights of Tenants

A landlord cannot take reprisal action against a tenant by eviction, substantial alteration of a lease or its terms, or refusal to renew a lease when a tenant exercises certain civil rights (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-10.10**). The law against reprisal applies to all rental properties used for dwelling purposes, including mobile homes, except owner-occupied two- or three-family dwellings. These civil rights are:

1. A tenant attempts to enforce any rights under the lease or State or local laws.

2. A tenant has made a good faith complaint to a governmental authority about a landlord's violation of any health or safety law, regulation, code, or ordinance. A tenant must have first notified the landlord in writing and given the landlord a reasonable time to correct the violation before making the complaint.

3. A tenant has been an organizer, or member, of any lawful organization, including a tenant organization.

4. A tenant refuses to comply with changes in the lease or agreement, if the change(s), have been made by the owner because the tenant took any of the above actions. If a landlord does take reprisal action, the tenant may sue the landlord for damages in a civil action.

Procedures for Recovery of Premises

A landlord may recover possession of a dwelling unit through a summary dispossess action in the Landlord-Tenant Section, Special Civil Part of the Superior Court Law Division in the county where the building is located. Monetary damages must be recovered in a separate civil action in Superior Court. Actions for rent recovery in the Special Civil Part cannot exceed $15,000.00.

When a landlord obtains a judgment for possession from the Special Civil Part, the warrant of removal cannot be issued until three (3) days after the judgment and only between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The warrant of removal cannot be executed until a minimum of three (3) days and two (2) days for seasonal tenants in buildings with five (5) or fewer units, have elapsed since it was issued. The Fair Eviction Notice Act requires any warrant for removal to include a notice that the tenant has a right to request more time (called a "stay of execution"). The court will continue the case for up to 10 days after the execution of the warrant for the purpose of hearing applications by the tenant for lawful relief.

Foreclosure

Recent changes to federal law have strengthened a tenant's rights in foreclosure proceedings. However, the federal law does not preempt any State or local law that provides longer time periods or other additional protections for tenants in foreclosure proceedings. Foreclosure alone is not grounds for eviction in New Jersey. In **Chase Manhattan Bank v. Josephson, 135 N.J. 209 (1994)** the court held that when a lender or other buyer takes possession of the property, the residential tenant comes with the property. Before a tenant can be evicted due to foreclosure, the landlord must provide the tenant with a 90-day notice to quit when the foreclosed property has been purchased by a buyer who wants to personally occupy it as his or her primary residence. However, if a tenant has a lease agreement that goes beyond the 90 days the landlord may not take action to evict the tenant until after the lease expires and the 90-day notice to quit has been given. The 90-day notice may be given 90 days before the lease expires. Month-to-month tenants and two- and three-family owner-occupied units are not exempt from the 90-day notice requirements.

Any person acquiring a foreclosed property containing one or more residential rental units must provide notices to the tenants in English and Spanish, within 10 business days after the sale, letting tenants know that ownership has changed hands and that the tenants are not required to move because of the foreclosure. In buildings with 10 or fewer dwelling units, the new owner must make a good faith effort to obtain the names of all the tenants occupying the property. Notices must be addressed to tenants by name, unless the new owner is unable to identify the tenant by name, then the owner shall address the notice to "Tenant." The notice must also be placed on the front door of each tenant's unit and sent to each tenant via certified and regular mail (**N.J.S.A. 2A:50-69 et seq.**).

In a residential property containing more than 10 dwelling units, the new owner must provide notice to tenants occupying the property by conspicuously displaying a copy of the "NOTICE TO TENANTS" in a prominent location, such as a common area of the building or other structure on the property. If there is no common area, the notice must be posted in a conspicuous location in each building, such as the walls of the front vestibule or any foyer or hallway near the main entrance of the building (**N.J.S.A. 2A:50-70(c)2**).

Notice Requirements to Tenants Prior to the Transfer of Title Due to a Foreclosure Action

Any written or verbal communication, including a summons and complaint, an initial written or verbal communication by a foreclosing creditor, or any communication written or verbal that requests a tenant to vacate the property before the foreclosure or sale of the property, requires the foreclosing creditor to give notice to the tenants as outlined in the New Jersey Court Rules, entitled "Notice to Residential Tenants of Rights During Foreclosure," (**APPENDIX XII-K**).

Notice Requirements to Tenants After the Transfer of Title Due to a Foreclosure Action

When making a bona fide monetary offer to induce tenants to move, the new owner must provide a separate and different notice from the notice required to be given by a foreclosing creditor. The new owner must provide a copy of the "NOTICE TO TENANTS" and give it with the initial and final written or verbal offer to the tenant.

The foreclosing agency, including a bank, creditor, or a new landlord may make a written bona fide (good faith) monetary offer requesting that the tenant vacate the property, without "good cause." An acceptance of the offer by the tenant must be in writing and include an acknowledgement of the date of the receipt of the offer, and an understanding that the tenant had a five-day review period to accept or reject the offer presented.

However, it is important to note that the acceptance of a bona fide monetary offer is voluntary. The tenant shall not be pressured by anyone, including the person making the offer to accept any offer to vacate the property. Pursuant to the New Jersey Foreclosure Fairness Act (**N.J.S.A. 2A:50-69 et seq.**), pressure tactics include but are not limited to (**N.J.S.A. 2A:50-71(b)**):

1. Mischaracterizing or misrepresenting the rights of the tenant under the law;

2. Implying the tenant is obligated to accept the offer;

3. Implying that there will be consequences against the tenant for failing to accept the offer;

4. Harassment, including but not limited to discontinuance of utilities, failure to maintain common areas or facilities, or any other failure to maintain the premises in a habitable condition; and

5. An increase in rent in excess of any rent control or rent leveling ordinance, or if the property is not subject to rent control, an unreasonable or unconscionable rent increase.

Senior Citizens and Disabled Tenants in Condominium or Cooperative Conversion

Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy

The Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act protects senior citizens who meet certain eligibility requirements (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.22 to -61.39; N.J.A.C. 5:24-2.1 to -2.11**). To qualify, tenants must : (1) be at least 62 years of age before the date of the conversion recording of the condominium or cooperative; or (2) be permanently disabled; or (3) be honorably discharged from any military service under certain circumstances from any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and disabled at 60% or higher resulting from said service and, (4) live in a building being converted to a condominium, cooperative; or fee simple ownership of units at least one (1) year prior to the conversion recording date. Tenants may be protected from eviction for 40 years if their family income is not more than three (3) times the average per person income in their county or $50,000.00, whichever is greater (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.28**). The date the conversion is recorded is the date on which a master deed or deed to a cooperative corporation, or a subdivision deed or map legally establishing separate lots, is filed. The landlord or converter is required to notify all tenants of their right to file for protected tenancy if they may be eligible. Generally, applications for protected tenancy must be filed with the designated municipal official or the administrative agent within 60 days, although later filings may be accepted if there is good reason for the late filing and the conversion has not yet taken place. Tenants in Hudson County (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.40 to -61.59; N.J.A.C. 5:24-3.1 to -3.4**) may be eligible for additional protected tenancy established under the Tenant Protection Act of 1992. For copies of the law, regulations or forms, landlords or converters, tenants, and local officials may visit our website at:

www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/codes/offices/landlord_tenant_information.html.

For help in filling out the forms, a tenant should contact the appropriate municipal administrative agent who sent the forms to him or her.

Tenant Protection Act of 1992

The Tenant Protection Law of 1992 amendment extends protections to qualified tenants in qualified counties in buildings converted or being converted who were not eligible for Protected Tenancy as either Senior Citizens or Disabled Persons under the "Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act of 1981" (**N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.40 to -61.59; N.J.A.C. 5:24-3.1 to -3.4**). At the present time, the only qualified county is Hudson County (**N.J.A.C. 5:24-3.2(b)**). Tenants in Hudson County with questions or in need of assistance in filling out the required forms should contact the Administrative Agent of their municipality.

Disclosure Statement to Senior Citizen Housing Residents

Every landlord of a senior citizen housing project and every landlord of a unit within a senior citizen housing project that is a planned unit development, shall, upon signing or renewal of a lease, give a copy of the Truth-In-Renting Statement and the Landlord Identity Statement, as well as a Statement that sets forth the telephone numbers of the State and local offices for the municipality designated to receive reports of housing emergencies and complaints. If the project is organized or operated as a planned real estate development, the governing board or body must provide copies of the Public Offering Statement registered with the New Jersey Department of

Community Affairs, along with a copy of the current bylaws. The tenant must sign a receipt for these Statements and documents. The Statements and documents must be posted in one (1) or more locations accessible to the tenants (**N.J.S.A. 2A:42-113**).

New Jersey Judiciary Ombudsman Offices

HTTPS://WWW.NJCOURTS.GOV/PUBLIC/OMBUDS.HTML

The Ombudsman provides assistance to citizens. The services include helping parties who do not have attorneys, by explaining court procedures, programs and service; confidentially receiving and documenting complaints from the public related to misunderstandings, conflicts, mistreatment or discrimination in the courthouse; and acting as a mediator to resolve conflicts between the public and the courts.

The Ombudsman also serves as a point of contact to citizens who may need assistance in coordinating multiple court services during their visit to the courthouse, makes referrals to other agencies of government, takes customer suggestions, and develops court tours and outreach programs.

VICINAGE	OMBUDSMAN	TELEPHONE NUMBERS
AOC Probation Services	Maurice Hart	609-815-3810 ext. 16314
Atlantic/Cape May	Ellen Procida-Fisher	609-402-0100 ext. 47230
Bergen	Kelly Gibson	201-221-0700 ext. 25103
Burlington	Heshim J. Thomas	609-288-9500 ext. 38118
Camden	Vannessa A. Ravenelle	856-650-9100 ext. 43090
Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem	Vanessa Cardwell	856-878-5050 ext. 15159
Essex	Sarah Hatcher	973-776-9300 ext. 56886
Hudson	Pauline D. Daniels	201-748-4400 ext. 60145
Mercer	Audrey Jones-Butler	609-571-4200 ext. 74205
Middlesex	Luis Hernandez	732-645-4300 ext. 88748
Monmouth	Rebekah Heilman	732-358-8700 ext. 87260
Morris/Sussex	Jennifer V. Shultis	862-397-5700 ext. 75160
Ocean	James Castaneda	732-504-0700 ext. 64470
Passaic	June Zieder	973-653-2910 ext. 24032
Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren	Elizabeth Raimondo	908-332-7700 ext. 13240
Superior Court Clerk's Office	Sven Pfahlert	609-815-2900 ext. 52757
Union	David Beverly	908-787-1650 ext. 21028

Anti-Discrimination Offices

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

HTTPS://WWW.NJ.GOV/OAG/DCR/LOCALCONTACT.HTML

CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE
140 EAST FRONT STREET, 6TH FLOOR
PO BOX 090
TRENTON, NJ 08625
TELEPHONE: 609-292-4605

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
31 CLINTON STREET, 3RD FLOOR
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102
TELEPHONE: 973-648-2700

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
5 EXECUTIVE CAMPUS, SUITE 107
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08034
TELEPHONE: 856-486-4080

SOUTH SHORE REGIONAL OFFICE
1325 BOARDWALK, 1ST FLOOR
TENNESSEE AVE & BOARDWALK
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ 08401
TELEPHONE: 609-441-3100

New Jersey's Legal Services Programs

LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY
PO BOX 1357
EDISON, NJ 08818-1357
(732) 572-9100
WWW.LSNJ.ORG/DIRECTORY.HTM

ATLANTIC COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
1300 ATLANTIC AVENUE, MEZZANINE FLOOR
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ 08401
(609) 348-4200

BERGEN COUNTY
NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
190 MOORE STREET, 1ST FLOOR
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY 07601
(201) 487-2166

BURLINGTON COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
107 HIGH STREET
MOUNT HOLLY, NJ 08060
(609) 261-1088

CAMDEN COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
745 MARKET STREET
CAMDEN, NJ 08102
1(800) 496-4570
(856) 964-2010

CAPE MAY COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
1261 ROUTE 9 SOUTH
CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE, NJ 08210
(609) 465-3001

CUMBERLAND COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
415 W. LANDIS AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
VINELAND, NJ 08360
(856) 691-0494

ESSEX COUNTY
ESSEX-NEWARK LEGAL SERVICES
5 COMMERCE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
NEWARK, NJ 07102
(973) 624-4500

GLOUCESTER COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
47 NEWTON AVENUE
WOODBURY, NJ 08096
(856) 848-5360

HUDSON COUNTY
NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
574 SUMMIT AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07306
(201) 792-6363

HUNTERDON COUNTY
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST JERSEY
82 PARK AVENUE
FLEMINGTON, NJ 08822
(908) 782-7979

MERCER COUNTY
CENTRAL JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
198 WEST STATE STREET
TRENTON, NJ 08608
(609) 695-6249

MIDDLESEX COUNTY
CENTRAL JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
317 GEORGE STREET, SUITE 201
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901
(732) 249-7600

313 STATE STREET, SUITE 308
PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
(732) 324-1613

MONMOUTH COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
303 WEST MAIN STREET, 3RD FLOOR
FREEHOLD, NJ 07728
(732) 414-6750

MORRIS COUNTY
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST JERSEY
30 SCHUYLER PLACE, 2ND FLOOR
MORRISTOWN, NJ 07963
(973) 285-6911

OCEAN COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
215 MAIN STREET
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753
(732) 608-7794

PASSAIC COUNTY
NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
152 MARKET STREET, 6TH FLOOR
PATERSON, NJ 07505
(973) 523-2900

SALEM COUNTY
SOUTH JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
415 W. LANDIS AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR
VINELAND, NJ 08360
(856) 691-0494

SOMERSET COUNTY
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST JERSEY
90 EAST MAIN STREET, 3RD FLOOR
SOMERVILLE, NJ 08876
(908) 231-0840

SUSSEX COUNTY
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST JERSEY
18 CHURCH STREET, SUITE 120
NEWTON, NJ 07860
(973) 383-7400

UNION COUNTY
CENTRAL JERSEY LEGAL SERVICES
60 PRINCE STREET
ELIZABETH, NJ 07208
(908) 354-4340

WARREN COUNTY
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST JERSEY
91 FRONT STREET
BELVIDERE, NJ 07823
(908) 475-2010

Additional Agencies and Organizations

The following is a list of public agencies and private organizations that offer informational services to landlords and/or tenants. It is provided solely for reference purposes and no endorsement is expressed or implied. Organizations interested in being included may contact the Department. The Department reserves the right to determine which organizations or agencies will be included.

If you are a tenant and need information, contact:

New Jersey Tenants Organization
96 Linwood Plaza #233
Fort Lee, NJ 07024
201-342-3775
https://www.njto.org

If you are a landlord or tenant and need assistance, contact:

NJ Apartment Association
104 Interchange Plaza, Suite 201
Monroe Twp., NJ 08831
(732) 992-0600
https://njaa.com/

Information for landlords (costs for service), contact:

Property Owners Association (POA)
1072 Madison Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
(732) 780-1966 Fax (732) 780-1611
https://www.poanj.org

For persons owning a mobile home trailer and renting the land in a mobile home park, contact:

Manufactured Home Owners Association of New Jersey, Inc.
P.O. Box 104
Jackson, NJ 08527
(732) 534-0085
https://www.mhoanj.org

For owners of mobile home parks and landlords of rented trailers, contact:

New Jersey Manufactured Housing Association
2741 Nottingham Way
Trenton, NJ 08619
(609) 588-9040
https://njmha.org

For questions concerning mobile home construction, contact:

NJ Department of Community Affairs
Office of Code Services, Industrialized Buildings Unit
Post Office Box 816

Trenton, NJ 08625-0816
(609) 984-7974

For mobile home parks designating themselves as adult parks only, contact:

Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunities
New York/New Jersey Regional Office
26 Federal Plaza, Room 3532
New York, NY 10278-0068
(212) 542-7519 or 1(800) 496-4294 TTY (212) 264-0927

For additional questions on mobile homes, contact a private attorney of your choice. For a referral to an attorney, contact your County Bar Association listed in your telephone directory or the Legal Services office in your county.

If you are being faced with an eviction action or condominium conversion, you may obtain information concerning the rights you possess under these circumstances by viewing the Eviction Law from:

https://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/offices/landlord_tenant_information.html

If Spanish is your primary language and you need assistance, please contact the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development (CHPRD). The CHPRD can provide a list of local resources available to the Hispanic Community. For additional information, the CHPRD can be contacted at:

Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development
PO Box 301
Trenton, NJ 08625-0301
(609) 943-4990
https://nj.gov/state/chprd.shtml

For information on housing codes and maintenance requirements for multiple dwellings (apartment buildings with 3 or more dwelling units) or to obtain a copy of the regulations for the maintenance of hotels and multiple dwellings you may write or call:

Department of Community Affairs
Bureau of Housing Inspection
P.O. Box 810
Trenton, NJ 08625-0810,
(609) 633-6210

If you are a tenant living in public housing subsidized by HUD and you would like to file a complaint regarding maintenance, discrimination, illegal practice or other resident concerns you may contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
One Newark Center
1085 Raymond Blvd., 13th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102-5260
(973) 622-7900
Multifamily Housing Complaint Line 1(800) 685-8470, TTY 1(800) 432-2209