

Living in a Landlord's Home:  
What You Should Include in Your Contract

If the landlord and tenant live in the same home, it is important to make two facts clear:

- “Landlord” includes not just the owner of the home, but also refers to the owner’s son/daughter/spouse/parent (NOTE: many ‘student houses’ will technically fall into this category)
- If you share the kitchen or bathroom with the “landlord”, then the relationship is exempt from the laws of the “Residential Tenancies Act” in Ontario

Therefore, it is very important – for both the landlord and the tenant – to have a thorough, written agreement in place, since this contract is what will govern your rental relationship.

As with any rental contract, there are a few basics to be included:

- The name of the landlord and the name of the renter
- The address of the property being rented
- The rental fee amount and when & how often the fee is to be paid
- The contract’s beginning and end date
- Signatures of both parties, accepting the terms and conditions, along with the date of signing

Based on experiences I’ve heard about over the years, here are some thoughts about clauses you might want to include in your rental contract:

- What does each person (owner as well as tenant) expect of the other with respect to:
  - Cleanliness/chores
  - Food and cooking
  - Quiet hours
  - House guests
  - Laundry facilities – restrictions of use?
  - Presence of pets
  - Privacy and rights of entry into certain rooms
- How much notice does one person need to give the other if someone wants to end the living arrangement prematurely (i.e. can the tenant be evicted? Can the tenant leave earlier?)
- Clearly state what utilities will be included in the rent, or how the utilities will be divided and paid for
- Clearly state what furniture is included (you may want to take photos to record the condition of the furniture, in case damage occurs over time)
- Who will be responsible for yard maintenance
- Any limitations to use of garage or yard space

These topics should be discussed and then written into the final agreement. Each person involved should receive a signed copy for their records.