

Chapter 7

WRITING LETTERS TO YOUR LANDLORD

When writing to your landlord, be specific in describing the problems you are having. Do not exaggerate or under-emphasize the extent of the problem. The landlord may show this letter to a judge if your problem is ever litigated. You want to make sure it conveys the truth of the situation accurately to give yourself the best possible chance of winning the case.

Remember to have a witness come with you if you deliver the letter to you landlord personally. And if you use the postal service, send it certified mail so you have proof that the landlord received it. Always keep a copy of anything you write to your landlord – you may need it to beck you up in court.

A Sample Letter for Rent Withholding and Repair and Deduct

DATE

NAME OF LANDLORD

ADDRESS OF LANDLORD

Mr./Ms./Mrs. Landlord (name):

Below is a list of problems in my apartment and building that need to be corrected. The problems are violations of The Chicago Residential Tenant and Landlord Ordinance and my lease agreement. Under the Ordinance, if you do not correct these problems within 14days, I may repair these problems and deduct the cost from my rent or withhold a portion of my rent to reflect the decreased value of my apartment.

Repairs needed (list as many items here as you need to)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS AND APARTMENT NUMBER

A Sample Letter for Terminating a Lease

DATE

NAME OF LANDLORD

ADDRESS OF LANDLORD

Mr./ Ms./ Mrs. Landlord (name):

The following is a list of problems that exist in my apartment or in the common areas of the building:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

These serious problems are in material noncompliance with The Chicago Residential Tenant and Landlord Ordinance and render my apartment not reasonably fit and habitable.

If these problems are not corrected within fourteen (14) days, I hereby inform you that I intend to terminate the rental agreement, which is my right under the Ordinance. I will move out within thirty (30) days after the rental agreement is terminated.

(Use this part of the letter to tell the landlord of your other attempts at getting repairs and of any suggestions you may have to help resolve the matter.)

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS AND APARTMENT NUMBER

A Sample Letter for Lack of Heat:

DATE
NAME OF LANDLORD
ADDRESS OF LANDLORD

Mr./Ms./Mrs. Landlord (name):

This notice is to inform you of the lack of sufficient heat in my apartment. Since (GIVE DATE AND TIME OF INITIAL FAILURE TO PROVIDE HEAT) I have been without heat (OR SUFFICIENT HEAT) throughout the entire apartment (OR SPECIFY WHICH PART OF THE APARTMENT LACKS HEAT) and I would like you to correct this problem immediately.

I have notified you (OR THE MANAGER, OF JANITOR, ETC.) about the heat problem by telephone, but I am presenting this notice in writing in order to exercise my rights under The Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance. Under the Ordinance I have the right to obtain reasonable amounts of heat and deduct this cost from my rent. I also have the right to withhold from my monthly rent an amount that reasonably reflects the reduced value of my apartment if the heat is not restored within 24 hours of receipt of this notice.

Please inform me as to how you intend to correct this problem. I can be contacted at (GIVE TELEPHONE NUMBER, TIME AND PLACE WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED).

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME
ADDRESS AND APARTMENT NUMBER