



***This list is compiled from issues commonly experienced by student renters. The list references Kingston's Property Standards bylaw, Fire Code and the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)***

### Windows and Doors:

- Need to be kept in good repair. Glass needs to be intact, frames must not be rotted, weather-stripping must be in place and wooden doors must be protected by paint or stain to prevent deterioration.
- Must be “reasonably draft free”, must open and close under normally applied pressure without jamming or binding, must open if intended to do so, and lock properly.
- Must have one entrance to every dwelling that is lockable from both outside and inside the unit (dead bolt)
- Need to have screens to keep out insects and pests.
- In a building with more than one unit, should have the unit number posted on or beside the door to ease identification by visitors, maintenance persons and emergency personnel.
- Should provide a window in every bedroom BUT that window does not need to open if they are adjacent a fire escape; Ontario Fire Code requires that those windows meet minimum fire-protection rating standards.
- Do not need locks on bedroom doors. A landlord must give permission for locks on interior doors.
- Do not have to have locks changed between tenancies.

### Walls, ceilings and floors:

- Every wall, ceiling and floor shall be maintained so as to be free of holes, cracks, loose coverings or other defects.
- Floors in every bathroom and kitchen must be impervious to water to permit cleaning. Wooden floors in bathrooms or kitchens must be sealed against water and must have any cracks between boards filled. Walls next to showers or baths need to be water resistant.
- Basement floors and walls must not allow water to enter or pass through.
- It is a tenant's job to keep ceilings, walls and floors in a clean, sanitary and safe condition. If a tenant makes a hole accidentally it is their job to fix it or get the landlord to fix it and pay the costs of repair.
- All floors need to be “acceptably” level.
- There cannot be gaps between ceiling and walls or floors and walls where garbage can accumulate. Look for baseboards and moldings or good taping and plastering.
- Flooring, including carpet, that becomes worn or torn, shall be repaired, replaced or removed.

## Roofs

- Must be weatherproof, structurally sound and free of loose material.
- A tenant who misuses a roof, for example using it as a balcony, can expect to be charged for damages.

## Minimum Heat

- When heat is included in the rent the landlord must, between the 15th day of September in each year and the 1st day of June of the following year, provide adequate and suitable heat at their expense; and for the purposes of this by-law, "adequate and suitable heat" means that the minimum temperature of the air in the accommodation which is available to the tenant is 21.1°C (70°F)
- Every dwelling unit shall be provide with a source of heat capable of maintaining 21.1°C (70°F)
- Portable heating units cannot be your primary source of heat.
- Landlords, or anyone working on their behalf may not disconnect or cause to be disconnected the heat to a dwelling unit occupied by a tenant, except when necessary to repair or replace the heating unit. Repairs that leave tenants without heat should be explained fully: how long will it take, what kind of noise and disruption can be expected and what access, if any, will service people need to the unit.
- If electric heat is currently included in the rent, the landlord can transfer the bill to the tenant *if* they follow the requirements for decreasing rent as set out in the RTA.
- Between November 15 and April 30 a utilities provider may not disconnect a tenant's electricity or gas.

## Insects and Vermin

- Buildings shall be kept free of rodents, vermin and insects at all times. This responsibility is shared by landlords and tenants. Landlords need to find and plug access points and pay for an exterminator. Tenants need to remove food sources by storing garbage properly and keeping food-goods in durable, pest-resistant containers.
- Any opening used for illumination or ventilation must be screened with durable material that will effectively exclude rodents, insects and vermin. Floor drains in basements must also be screened.
- Tenants need to tell landlords at the first sign of insects, rodents or pests. Don't let the problem get out of control.

## Mould

- Controlling moisture and keeping a home dry is the key to preventing and stopping mould growth.
- Neither the Kingston bylaws nor the RTA specifically refer to mould. Bylaws concerning walls and floors help keep water out and lower the risk of mould.
- Bathrooms need a window that opens, OR a fan; tenants need to use the fan or window to ventilate the moisture adequately. Ventilation is key.
- Keeping a unit too cold can encourage condensation which leave dampness for mould growth. Leave some room between large furniture (beds, sofas and bookshelves) and exterior walls to allow for warm air to circulate.

- Use the exhaust hood over your stove, if provided, or open a nearby window when boiling large amounts of water.
- Clothes dryers must be vented to the outdoors. Too much wet laundry hung indoors can increase the dampness in the home and lead to mold.
- Mould can grow places that you can't see. Property Standards Inspectors cannot open up walls or ceilings to look for mould. Their inspections are visual non-invasive reviews only.

### Vital Services

- Heat (in season), water and electricity are considered vital services and your landlord can't leave you without these things for extended periods of time. The exception would be when severe weather or, say, a fire in an adjacent building prevents the landlord from providing you with vital services.
- Tenants who pay their own utilities may not leave the unit without vital services. Tenants must have utilities hooked up in their unit for the entire length of the tenancy.

### Home Safety

- Every part of your home should be free of rot and able to support its own weight plus any additional load to which it may be subjected through normal use.
- Exterior stairs and porches need to be free of defects and protected from the elements by paint or another suitable preservative.
- Stairs of more than three risers or height of more than 600mm need to have a rigid handrail.
- Parking areas need to be surfaced with asphalt, crushed stones, paving stones or concrete. Dirt is not sufficient.
- There must be at least one smoke alarm on every level of your unit.
- Each unit must have a Carbon Monoxide detector.

### Stuff you may not have thought of

- Any furniture that is manufactured for interior can't be used outside of a dwelling. Furniture outside of a dwelling that becomes dilapidated needs to be disposed of. City officials may affix a ticket to your front door.
- Garbage and recycling containers cannot be put out before 6PM the night before your pick-up and must be retrieved before 6PM on the day of pick-up.
- Every owner must post, in a common area, contact information where an authorized person responsible for the property can be reached in case of an emergency on a 24 hour basis.
- Occupancy is based on square footage of your unit not number of "bedrooms". Building code allows two people to share a sleeping space.

Contact Student Community Relations for tips on next steps

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