



**RE/MAX<sup>®</sup> ALLIANCE**

# TENANT HANDBOOK

## Rules & Regulations

This Tenant Handbook is an integral part of the Lease.

We hope you enjoy your rental home!

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## General Information

### **OFFICE LOCATION:**

**RE/MAX Alliance - Town Center**  
4701 Columbus Street, Suite 200  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
(757)456-2345

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

The Town Center office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am. - 5:30pm., and Saturday 9:00am. to 5:00pm. A receptionist is available to accept your check and give you a receipt. All routine communications should be directed to your Property Manager during office hours.

***Important:*** If you need to leave a payment before or after office hours, there is a locked drop box outside the Town Center office. Payments should be in an envelope with your property address and Property Manager's name clearly printed on the outside. This is to ensure that your rent is given to the correct Property Manager and processed in a timely manner.

**EMERGENCIES:** On weekends, holidays, and after normal working hours, an answering service will pick up all calls received on our corporate office line (757-456-2345). They will contact your Property Manager as soon as possible for the following emergencies:

- ◆ NO heat (in season)
- ◆ Broken pipes with running water
- ◆ Physical damage to the property

Other messages will be delivered to your Property Manager during normal working hours.

**RENT:** Rent is due on the first day of each month in advance, without deduction, offset, or demand. Payments may be made by electronic debit (ACH), check, or money order. Money orders can be purchased at your local supermarket, bank, post office, and convenience stores. CASH PAYMENTS FOR RENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT ANY TIME. Please make your check payable to RE/MAX Alliance. All rents are to be paid at the address listed above.

**NOTE:** Be sure that your check shows the property address for which you are paying rent clearly marked on the face of the check.

**ACH:** Any change to a debited account must be received by the Property Manager no later than the 15th of the month. Tenant agrees to provide the Property Manager with an updated Tenant Payment Form and a copy of the preprinted voided check. Starter checks are not accepted, the check must have a preprinted name.

**DELINQUENT RENT:** If rent is not received by the due date, a late fee will be charged according to your Lease and a notice of default will be sent. These default notices are serious, as they precede legal action, and affect credit standings. Once we forward default notices to our attorney, you will be responsible for court costs and attorney fees, even if rent and late fees are paid prior to the court date.

**RENTAL PAYMENTS:** Checks and ACH Payments returned for non-sufficient funds or any other reason will incur an NSF (Non Sufficient Funds) service fee. Repayment must be made by certified check or money order. If your Electronic Debit is returned for non-sufficient funds 2 times, you will be taken off of ACH and monthly payments must be made by certified funds thereafter. A monthly processing fee may apply.

**AGENCY:** The Tenant acknowledges disclosure that RE/MAX Alliance and the Property Manager represent the Owner of the Premises.

**VRLTA:** The Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA) became law in 1974; its purpose being to express the rights and obligations of all parties to a rental agreement. We adhere to all provisions of the VRLTA.

## **CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS, PHONE NUMBER, OR EMAIL CHANGES:**

The Tenant is required to notify the Property Manager immediately upon any change to: employment, e-mail addresses, home phone number, or cell phone.

**INSURANCE:** Tenant(s) are required to provide proof of renter's insurance, by the Lease Start Date and at each renewal, which is to include insurance to cover the Premises if the tenant is determined to have caused the damage to the Premises. **Tenants are required to maintain renters insurance with minimum liability of \$300,000 and include RE/MAX Alliance as an additional interest.** Additional circumstances may require higher minimum liability coverage as determined by your Property Manager. Contact an insurance agent for a renter's policy which will afford you protection as well as liability coverage. Talk to your insurance agent about additional riders that may be available to you. A "rider" is additional coverage with a set of terms and conditions that "rides on" the basic package offered by the insurance company. A few examples of additional riders would be: loss of use, flood coverage, theft protection, jewelry coverage, etc. Any damage to the Premises caused by break-ins or unlawful entries is the Tenant's responsibility.

## **INSPECTIONS:**

**MOVE-IN INSPECTION:** The Tenant will be provided with a "move-in inspection" report from the Property Manager. The Tenant will have five (5) days to complete their move-in inspection report. In the event that the Property Manager does not receive the completed inspection report within the proper time period, it is presumed that the Premises are in good, fit, and habitable condition. It is the Tenant's responsibility to make sure that the Property Manager received the report. This report will be cross-referenced upon your departure, and any damages not deemed normal wear and tear will be deducted from your security deposit. Damages in excess of the security deposit will be the responsibility of the Tenant, and the court system will be used to collect any unpaid charges.

**PERIODIC/ANNUAL INSPECTIONS:** From time to time, your Property Manager will conduct a routine inspection of the Premises so that the Owner(s) can be apprised of the property's condition.

**LOCK OUTS:** Keys are provided to you on the Lease Start Date. Property Managers will not facilitate access in the event of a lock out. If you lose your keys or accidentally get locked out of the property, call a professional locksmith. Other than emergencies, you are not authorized to change or re-key any lock without written permission from your Property Manager. Should an emergency require the locks to be changed, it must be completed professionally and your Property Manager must be furnished a complete set of keys immediately.

**CONDO / HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS:** In the event that you are renting a home that is governed by Association By-laws, the Tenant agrees to abide by all rules, regulations and restrictions as set forth by the Association, and Tenants shall be bound by all the rules, regulations and restrictions.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** We encourage you to participate in the civic league, neighborhood watch programs or other functions in your community. This will enhance your enjoyment of the area as well as benefit you, your neighbors and Hampton Roads.

**VEHICLE PARKING:** Parking of vehicles shall be either in assigned areas (garages, parking lots, driveways, parking pads) or on the public street, where allowed. Vehicles shall never be parked on lawns or sidewalks. DO NOT drive moving vans on to lawn for loading or unloading. This could damage septic systems or sewer lines, which would result in expensive repairs for which you will be responsible. All Tenants will observe neighborhood, condo association, homeowner association, and city restrictions as to the number and type of vehicles that are permitted to be parked on your property. No boats, campers, RV's, school buses, or any other large vehicles are to be parked anywhere on the Premises without expressed written approval of the Agent. No unlicensed or unregistered vehicles will be permitted on the Premises, other than in the garage.

**WATER CONSERVATION:** Local city governments often enact ordinances to restrict the use of city water during periods of drought. It is the Tenant's responsibility to understand the water restrictions and the Owner of the property assumes no liability for non-compliance.

**TRASH:** All trash must be removed from the Premises on a regular basis. Most localities offer free trash removal service. You must contact the city if you have a bulk trash pick up. Some cities will impose a fee if trash receptacles are put out too early or brought in too late. All fees will be the responsibility of the Tenant.

**UTILITIES:** Listed below are the phone numbers you may use to have the utilities connected in your name. You should make arrangements for connection as early as possible, as some utilities may require up to several days notice. Tenant must keep all utilities and services on for the entire term of the Lease and through the 5<sup>th</sup> day after the End Date of the Lease, and any extensions, and maintain utilities to prevent damages to the Premises. Heating/Cooling must be set at an appropriate temperature for the season. Tenant also agrees that failure to do so will cause a re-connection fee to be charged to the Tenant.

Be sure to give the utility company your Property Manager's name, not just RE/MAX Alliance. If the utility company is unable to verify your tenancy in a timely manner, there could be a delay in the connection of your utility services.

<b>UTILITY &amp; SERVICES PHONE NUMBERS</b>	
<p><b><u>Electric:</u></b>            Dominion Virginia Power            888.667.3000 <a href="http://www.dom.com">www.dom.com</a>            Va. Bch., Ches., Nor., Ports., Suf., Hamp, Newport News</p>	<p><b><u>Communications:</u></b>  <b>Verizon</b>            800.483.3000 or 757.954.6222  <a href="http://www.verizon.com">www.verizon.com</a>            (Cable, Digital Phone &amp; Internet)            Va. Bch., Ches., Nor., Ports. &amp; Suf.</p> <p><b>Cavalier Telephone</b>            866.290.4200 <a href="http://www.cavtel.com">www.cavtel.com</a>            (Telephone &amp; Internet )            Va. Bch., Ches., Nor., Ports. &amp; Suf.</p> <p><b>Cox Communications</b>            757.222.1111 <a href="http://www.cox.com">www.cox.com</a>            (Cable, Digital Phone &amp; Internet) Va. Bch., Ches., Nor., Ports. &amp; Suf.            Verizon and Cox have bundle packages available for multiple services</p>
<p><b><u>Water/Sewer:</u></b>            Va. Beach* 757.385.4631            Chesapeake* 757.382.6352            Norfolk 757.664.6700            Portsmouth 757.393.8691            Suffolk 757.923.3670            Hampton &amp; Newport News 757.926.1000</p> <p>*Also establishes account with Hampton Roads Sanitation District, storm water management and trash pick-up if applicable to the Premises. You will receive two separate bills each period.</p>	<p><b><u>Storm Water Management:</u></b>            Va. Beach 757.385.4631            Chesapeake 757.382.2489            Norfolk 757.664.4600            Portsmouth 757.393.3691            Suffolk (n/a)            Hampton 757.727.8311            Newport News 757.269.2700</p>
<p><b><u>Gas:</u></b>  <b>Virginia Natural Gas</b>            866.229.3578  <a href="http://www.virginianaturalgas.com">www.virginianaturalgas.com</a>            Va. Bch., Ches., Nor., Ports., Suf., Hamp, Newport News</p> <p><b>Columbia Gas</b>            800.543.8911  <a href="http://www.columbiagasva.com">www.columbiagasva.com</a>            Chesapeake &amp; Portsmouth</p>	<p><b><u>Trash Department:</u></b>            Va. Beach 757.385.4650            Chesapeake 757.382.2489            Norfolk 757.441.5813            Portsmouth 757.393.8663            Suffolk 757.923.2460            Hampton: 757.727.8311            Newport News: 757.269.2700</p> <p><b><u>City Websites:</u></b>            Virginia Beach: <a href="http://www.vbgov.com">www.vbgov.com</a>            Chesapeake: <a href="http://www.cityofchesapeake.net">www.cityofchesapeake.net</a>            Norfolk: <a href="http://www.norfolk.gov">www.norfolk.gov</a>            Portsmouth: <a href="http://www.portsmouthva.gov">www.portsmouthva.gov</a>            Suffolk: <a href="http://www.suffolkva.us">www.suffolkva.us</a>            Hampton: <a href="http://www.hampton.gov">www.hampton.gov</a>            Newport News: <a href="http://www.nngov.com">www.nngov.com</a></p> <p><b><u>RECYCLING:</u></b>  <a href="http://www.GoGreenHamptonRoads.com">www.GoGreenHamptonRoads.com</a></p>

**INSTALLATION OF CABLE AND SATELLITE DISHES:**

Advanced written approval from the Property Manager must be given to install additional cable outlets or a satellite dish. Tenant will be required to provide this documentation to the installer. It is understood that the Owner of the Premises will bear no financial responsibility for any installation. It is further understood that all work will be done in a professional and workmanship like manner. The Tenant will be responsible for professionally repairing any damage resulting from this installation, receipt may be required. The Owner reserves the right to require the Tenant to return the premises to its original condition, if requested, by a certified roofing contractor. It is recommended that a satellite dish should be mounted on a pole in the backyard. An existing satellite dish cannot be moved or relocated without prior written approval.

**PEST CONTROL:** Please report any pest problem within five (5) days of taking possession. If not reported in writing, it is agreed that the Premises has no problem with infestation of any kind at the Lease Start Date and it will be the Tenant's responsibility if any future infestations occur.

**PETS:** Having a pet on the Premises is a privilege. All pets must be approved in writing by the Property Manager prior to allowing a pet on the Premises including pet sitting. Tenant may be required to pay a pet deposit or pet fee in certified funds, and/or a pet rent. Tenant will clean up after all pets and will be responsible for any damage caused by the pets. Tenant shall pay according to the damage assessed, including but not limited to, cleaning or replacing of flooring, cabinets, grass, interior and exterior treatment for fleas and ticks. Refer to page 8 regarding pet stains.

Tenant is required to obey all local ordinances. If any animal becomes a nuisance to neighbors, destroys the interior or exterior of the Premises, or becomes a danger to anyone this privilege can be revoked.

Guests are not permitted to bring pets onto the Premises.

After the execution of the Lease, all new/additional pets require approval from the Property Manager. Aggressive breed dogs and exotic pets are strictly prohibited unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Property Manager.

**SMOKING:** If the Premises is a non-smoking property and the Property Manager finds that there was smoking in the Premises, Tenant(s) will be responsible for all damages. This may include priming and painting of all walls and ceilings, replacement of draperies, carpeting, fixtures, and ozone treatment.

**MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS PROVIDED BY OWNER:** Your Property Manager will arrange for all maintenance and repairs that are the responsibility of the Owner. Repairs (except emergencies) will be scheduled during normal business hours and the Tenant is responsible for granting access to the contractor if required. Because of the distance involved and the number of repairs scheduled each day, our Property Managers are not able (nor are they required) to be at the property to grant access or to supervise jobs. Tenant shall be responsible for paying the cost of any unnecessary service call and any costs incurred as a result of the Tenant failing to keep appointments with service persons that require access in order to make scheduled repairs.

## **MOVE-OUT PROCESS**

**NOTICE TO TERMINATE:** The Tenant is responsible for providing the Property Manager written notice of at least the Renewal Notice Period, PRIOR TO THE AUTOMATIC RENEWAL of the current Lease, if Tenant does not wish to renew the Lease for another term. If the Tenant fails to give the proper notice, the Lease will automatically renew for another term as stated in the Lease. Written notice must be received no later than the first day of the month. All notices must be in writing and mailed or hand delivered to the Property Manager. The Property Manager must receive the notice in the required time frame or it will be considered invalid. Excuses of "lost in the mail" or the failure of the post office to deliver the notice on time, WILL NOT be accepted. Agent reserves the right for Owner and Tenant to send notices in electronic form; however, if Tenant so requests, Tenant may elect to send and receive notices in paper form. If electronic delivery is used, the sender shall retain sufficient proof of the electronic delivery, which may be an electronic receipt of delivery, a confirmation that the notice was sent by facsimile, or a certificate of service prepared by the sender confirming the electronic delivery.

Owner may change any of the terms of this Lease by giving Tenant notice of the new term(s) at least 15 days prior to the Renewal Notice Period. If Tenant fails to terminate this Lease to be effective on the renewal date, as provided above, Tenant accepts all new or changed terms.

### **Early Lease Terminations Due to Military Transfers:**

#### **Notice to vacate the Premises in accordance with VRLTA 55-248.21:1.**

A. Any member of the armed forces of the United States or a member of the National Guard serving on full-time duty or as a Civil Service Technician with the National Guard may, through the procedure detailed in subsection B, terminate his rental agreement if the member (i) has received permanent change of station orders to depart 35 miles or more (radius) from the location of the dwelling unit; (ii) has received temporary duty orders in excess of three months' duration to depart 35 miles or more (radius) from the location of the dwelling unit; (iii) is discharged or released from active duty with the armed forces of the United States or from his full-time duty or technician status with the National Guard; or (iv) is ordered to report to government-supplied quarters resulting in the forfeiture of basic allowance for quarters.

B. Tenants who qualify to terminate a rental agreement pursuant to subsection A shall do so by serving the landlord a written notice of termination to be effective on a date stated therein, such date to be not less than 30 days after the first date on which the next rental payment is due and payable after the date on which the written notice is given. The termination date shall be no more than 60 days prior to the date of departure necessary to comply with the official orders or any supplemental instructions for interim training or duty prior to the transfer. Prior to the termination date, the tenant shall furnish the landlord with a copy of the official notification of the orders or a signed letter, confirming the orders, from the tenant's commanding officer. The landlord may not charge any liquidated damages.

C. Nothing in this section shall affect the tenant's obligations established by § 55-248.16.

D. The exemption provided in subdivision 10 of subsection A of § 55-248.5 shall not apply to this section.

**SECURITY DEPOSITS:** Tenant's security deposit may NOT be applied to the final month's rent. Deposits are refundable within 45 days of vacating.

Upon the termination or expiration of the Lease, Tenant agrees to remove all of Tenant's property from the Premises and deliver possession of the Premises to the Property Manager in good and clean condition. Tenant will be liable for any damages that Owner/Agent may suffer due to Tenant's failure to leave the Premises in the required condition, including any loss of rent from the next tenant. Any damage not noted on the Move-in Inspection form, which exists when Property Manager makes the final inspection at the termination of occupancy, will be charged to Tenant and may be deducted by Property Manager from the Security Deposit. Release of the Security Deposit is subject to, but not limited to the following provisions:

- A. The full term of the Lease has expired.
- B. Required written notice, in accordance with the terms of the Lease was given prior to vacating the Premises. It is the Tenant's sole responsibility to ensure that RE/MAX Alliance has received full and proper notice.
- C. There are no unpaid late charges or delinquent rent.
- D. No damages to the Premises beyond normal wear and tear.
- E. The Premises have been cleaned according to Move-Out Guidelines and Tenant Handbook.
- F. Carpets professionally cleaned by approved contractor and receipt provided to Property Manager.
- G. Fireplace/chimney/gas logs, and dryer vent are professionally cleaned/inspected by approved contractor and receipt provided to Property Manager.
- H. No stickers, scratches, nails or nail holes left in walls that were not pre-existing.
- I. No indentations or scratches in wood or resilient flooring caused by furniture, pets, etc.
- J. All debris and trash/recycle receptacles must be empty at move-out and no debris to be left at curbside for bulk pick-up. If trash is left on the Premises, Tenant will be charged to remove trash and debris.
- K. All air filters must be replaced and air vent/grids cleaned.
- L. Yard must be clean, lawn mowed and edged, gutters cleaned, shrubbery trimmed, flower beds weeded, and mulch replaced.
- M. Tenant also agrees to surrender to the Property Manager all keys, parking passes, pool/clubhouse keys, garage door openers, ceiling fan remotes, and access cards to the Premises and any other amenities on the Premises on the date that Tenant vacates the Premises. Failure to return all keys and access cards will result in a deduction from the Security Deposit to compensate Owner for the cost of re-keying or re-programming the locks. Per-diem rent will be charged for each day keys/access cards are not returned.

***NOTE:*** *The cost of labor and materials for cleaning and repairs, and outstanding balances will be deducted from the Security Deposit if the above provisions are not met. If repairs or cleaning are required after the final inspection, the Tenant will be charged a Coordination fee per contractor, a re-inspection fee, and in addition, other fees may apply. The Security Deposit will be refunded within 45 days of the Lease expiration date. Security Deposit refunds are disbursed by check, mailed to the forwarding address and made payable to all Tenant(s) names on the Lease, unless other arrangements have been made in writing and approved by all parties involved.*

**MOVE-OUT INSPECTION:** Under the VRLTA, the Property Manager will make reasonable efforts to provide Tenant with notice of a right to be present at the move-out inspection. Tenant must make a written request to the Property Manager to be present at such an inspection and the Property Manager will notify Tenant of the inspection time which will occur within 72 hours of the termination of the tenancy. If Tenant fails to make such a request or fails to schedule an inspection, the Property Manager will proceed to do the move-out inspection without Tenant being present.

***NOTE:*** *Move out inspections are conducted Monday – Friday from 9:00am. – 4:00pm. Inspections at any other time may result in an "after hours" fee. The Tenant is responsible for the condition of the home for the entire Term of the Lease. All utilities and services must kept on for the entire term of the Lease and through the 5<sup>th</sup> day after the End Date of this Lease and any extensions. Heating and cooling must be set at an appropriate temperature for the season. Tenant also agrees that failure to do so will cause a re-connection fee to be charged to the Tenant and Tenant is liable for any resulting damages to the Premises. If the property does not pass the initial move-out inspection, Tenant may incur a re-inspection fee.*

**SHOWING THE PROPERTY:** Upon notice that the Lease will not be renewed, RE/MAX Alliance and other authorized agents have the authority to show the property to prospective Tenants and/or purchasers. The Property Manager will give Tenant reasonable notice when the property is to be shown. The Property Manager will do their best to schedule showings when it is convenient for you, but that may not always be possible. Proper notice is considered given when the Property Manager leaves a voicemail at the primary number. Tenant is expected to have the Premises in clean and neat condition. Remember that having the home neat and clean and all pets secured for showings may result in the Premises being rented sooner.

## **MAINTENANCE**

This troubleshooting guide is provided to help you solve some of the most common problems encountered by our Tenants. Use this handbook as a reference before calling for service.

**LAWN MAINTENANCE:** The grass, shrubbery, and flower beds are the Tenant's responsibility unless otherwise noted in the lease. Grass should be cut and edged every 7-10 days during the growing season (April-October). Trees, bushes, and shrubs should be cut and pruned when required. During prolonged dry spells, the grass and shrubs should be watered. All flower beds should be weeded, watered, and kept in clean condition.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to keep your lawn looking green and healthy:

- 1. Stay sharp.** Dull mower blades will leave grass with ragged tips rather than a clean edge
- 2. Don't go too short.** Let grass grow to a length of about 3 to 3 ½ inches during the growing season. Cutting grass too short can damage your lawn. When mowing, cut about 1/3 of the grass blade.
- 3. Hire a professional.** If you don't have the time or patience to maintain your lawn, consider using a lawn care service. They can take the guesswork out of the process by ensuring that your lawn gets the proper nutrients and care.

**AIR FILTERS:** Tenants are responsible for replacing the air filters monthly and keeping the air vent grids clean and free of dirt and dust. The most important maintenance task that will ensure the efficiency of your air conditioner is to routinely replace or clean its filters. Clogged, dirty filters block normal air flow and reduce a system's efficiency significantly. Tenant(s) shall bear the expense of all repair costs and chemical cleaning due to the filters not being changed. Tenant shall replace or clean and thoroughly dry if instructed, and keep air vent/grids cleaned.

**SMOKE DETECTORS:** It is vital that smoke alarms in the property be operational at ALL times. There should be one smoke alarm on each floor of a multi-story home. If you have one or more battery powered smoke alarms, please keep spare batteries on hand and test the units using the "test" button at least once per month. Hard-wired A/C powered smoke alarms will normally have an indicator light (usually red) to show they have power. This type of alarm may also contain a battery back-up, so again you should familiarize yourself with the type of alarm you have and how to keep it operational. REPORT PROBLEMS OR FAILURES OF SMOKE ALARMS TO YOUR PROPERTY MANAGER IMMEDIATELY.

*NOTE: DO NOT DISABLE YOUR SMOKE ALARM FOR ANY REASON. DOING SO IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW.*

### **CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:**

Tenant shall not remove or tamper with a properly functioning carbon monoxide detector, including removing any working batteries, so as to render the detector inoperative. Tenant shall have the right to install carbon monoxide detectors in the Premises at Tenant's sole cost and expense. Neither Owner/Agent are responsible in any way for the installation or use of a Tenant installed carbon monoxide detector and Tenant agrees to hold Owner and Agent harmless from any and all claims or losses arising therefrom and to indemnify Owner and Agent from and against any and all claims, liability, loss or damage therefore. If Tenant installs a carbon monoxide detector, Tenant will be responsible for removing the detector when vacating the Premises.

**CARPETS:** Carpets must be professionally cleaned annually and at termination of the Lease when all personal property has been removed from the Premises. When you are in the process of moving out, please schedule with the approved carpet cleaning contractor specified in your move-out guidelines and provide a copy of the receipt to the Property Manager. All carpet must be dry by the day of your move-out inspection.

### **TIPS ON CARPET AND PET STAINS:**

- ◆ Blot up any liquid by putting towels or absorbent rags over the spot and stepping on them. Start with gentle pressure and increase it up to putting your full weight down. Change to fresh rags or towels until no more liquid comes up
- ◆ For fresh pet stains, apply a bacteria/enzyme digester from a pet store, following the directions—it's the only way to deal effectively with both the stain and the odor. Bacteria/enzyme digesters work slowly, so leave the solution on as long as the directions instruct. Urine has probably penetrated into the carpet and pad, so use enough solution to reach as far down as the stain. Apply the solution, put plastic over it, and step on the spot several times until the area is well saturated. Then leave the plastic on the whole time the digester is working to make sure the spot doesn't dry out.
- ◆ Old or dry stains are hard—sometimes even impossible—to remove, but try the bacteria/enzyme digester. If it's a popular accident site, the bacteria may produce enough ammonia in the course of breaking down the stains to create a super-alkaline situation that interferes with its own action. In this case, you may need to neutralize the spot after the

digester has been working for about four hours. Mix a solution of one cup of vinegar to a gallon of warm water. Rinse the area with this solution and apply a fresh batch of bacteria/enzyme solution.

- ◆ Odor is considered damage. If the odor remains, call a professional deodorizing specialist. If all else fails, a complete cure will probably involve cleaning the entire carpet by extraction or replacing the carpet and pad.

**WALLS:** DO NOT use contact paper or sticky paper hangers on walls, doors, or cabinet surfaces.

**FIREPLACES:** Your fireplace is not an incinerator for trash and this could be very dangerous. Never burn pressure-treated wood; the fumes are deadly! The fireplace should be inspected and cleaned by an approved chimney sweep or approved gas log inspector annually. Burn hardwood only, so a build-up of tar and soot can be avoided.

- ◆ **Dispose of fireplace and wood-stove ashes properly:**

1. Do not discard your ashes into any combustible container like a paper or plastic bag, a cardboard box, or a plastic trash can.
2. Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.
3. When you want to stop a fire from burning, do not add any additional wood to the fireplace. This will allow the fire to cease on its own accord. When a fire is ceasing, leave it alone and do not remove any ashes that accumulate until they have cooled (when a gray color prevails in the ashes and when heat does not emanate from the ashes). The cooling process for ashes should take between 10-15 hours. Once the ashes have cooled, use a metal scoop and metal bucket to remove them from the fireplace. Using metal objects is another safety precaution in case there are any hot ashes remaining in the fireplace that you did not notice. After ashes have cooled in a metal container, it is necessary to find a suitable disposal site. Never dump fireplace ashes until they have had at least four (4) days to cool.
4. If you are not sure whether all the ashes in the bucket have cooled completely, you can also add some water to the bucket to douse any remaining hot spots.
5. Do not ever store the ashes inside your house or garage. Keep them at least six (6) feet away from anything that burns including your deck or house. These ashes can smolder for hours and possibly days after they may appear to be out. In addition to the danger of an unintentional fire, they can emit deadly fumes.
6. When the ashes have been disposed of properly, clean and sweep out your fireplace. It is ready to be used another time.

**WOOD STOVES:** Ask the Property Manager if there are any special instructions. Generally, stoves are restricted to hardwood only.

**GAS FIREPLACE:** Please follow the instruction manual for proper use of the gas logs. If you are using gas logs, purchasing a Carbon Monoxide Detector is strongly recommended. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, potentially lethal gas produced as a byproduct when fuels such as natural or propane gas, kerosene, and wood are burned. It's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly when using any type of fuel-burning appliance.

**WATER SHUT-OFF:** One of the first things you should do after move in is to locate the main "shut off valve". During a flood is not the time to start the search. The most common places to find this valve are in the garage, close to the water heater (NOT at the top of the heater), in a closet, under the kitchen/bathroom sink, or in the utility room. It is round with a scalloped edge. Some old houses have a bent piece of iron coming up through the floor, usually in a closet, that can be turned to shut the water off. Try the shut off but do not be surprised if all the water does not stop immediately. Some shut offs on older houses will only slow the water to a trickle but it is definitely better than a flood. Some older homes may not have an interior shut off valve.

**ELECTRICAL POWER PANEL:** Locate the panel, check to see if you have fuses or circuit breakers.

**CIRCUIT BREAKERS:** We have a number of problems each year because people think that a circuit breaker pops by moving the circuit switch to the OFF position. This is not the case!! The circuit breaker switch moves very slightly and unless you look closely, you may still think that it is ON. To reset, simply turn the circuit breaker OFF and back ON again. If you are not sure, try them all. OFF--then--ON.

One type of circuit breaker found in many properties is the GFI (ground fault interrupter) circuit breaker. This circuit breaker detects the slightest voltage going to ground and cuts the power off. It is used in bathrooms, kitchens, exterior plugs, garages, and some lights. Most houses have the GFI circuit breaker in one bathroom or the main circuit breaker panel. It is usually marked with a red or yellow button and it is between the upper and lower plugs in a bathroom or outside installation. Some houses have the GFI at an outside plug. When moisture gets into one of your plugs, the GFI circuit breaker pops, so please make sure the covers are closed on your outside plugs during rainy weather.

**NOTE:** The circuit breakers are ON when both rows of circuit breakers are positioned toward the center of the panel.

**FURNACES:** Gas and oil furnaces have an emergency “shut off “switch within/ in sight of the furnace unit. Most have a red cover plate labeled EMERGENCY CUT OFF or OIL BURNER EMERGENCY CUT OFF. The switch is often mistaken for a light switch. If the furnace stops working, this switch is the first place to check. If the Property Manager sends a contractor out for service and the contractor finds that the red switch was off, Tenant will be charged for the service call.

**OIL HEAT:** Refer to your lease regarding automatic oil delivery requirements. Do not let your tank run dry as it may require a service call to get the furnace restarted. Sludge in the bottom of the tank usually clogs the lines and nozzle and the entire system must be cleaned before it will work again. If service is needed due to the tank running dry, Tenant will be responsible for paying for the service. If the furnace stops working, check the RED switch first and call the Property Manager for service. If the Property Manager sends a contractor out for service and the contractor finds that the red switch was off, Tenant will be charged for the service call.

**GAS HEAT:** The RED emergency switch must be in an ON position at all times. If the heat is not working, the first thing to check is the red switch. If the heat is still not working, turn off the thermostat. Reset the heating circuit breakers. Turn the thermostat back on. The system could take up to 15 minutes to come back on and up to an hour to warm the house again. If the heat is not working after an hour of resetting, call the Property Manager for service. If the Property Manager sends a contractor out for service and the contractor finds that the red switch was off, Tenant will be charged for the service call.

**HEAT PUMP:** The heat pump is the most economical method of heating in this area - if used properly. Set a comfortable temperature and then LEAVE THE CONTROL ALONE. The air coming from the vents will always be colder than the body temperature. During extremely cold temperatures, or when the emergency heat switch is turned on, filament heaters will provide extra heat. Do not be surprised if you find the outside unit steaming or caked with ice on a cold day. It is not an emergency, but let your Property Manager know if ice is forming on the unit.

**BASE BOARD HEAT:** Ensure that air is free to flow under the radiator unit. If blocked by a thick rug, the unit will not heat properly. Keep the door closed if you are heating one room only. Cold air will always rush into a room causing drafts and false reading on the room thermostat.

**WATER HEATER:** Water heaters may be gas or electric. If the water heater fails to provide any hot water, check the breaker or fuse. Report to the Property Manager if there is still no hot water.

**AIR CONDITIONERS:** Poor cooling is usually caused by a clogged filter. Check to see if the filter has been changed and there is adequate airflow. Reset the circuit breaker. If the unit still will not cool, check to ensure that the RED switch is ON and call the Property Manager for service. If the Property Manager sends a contractor out for service and the contractor finds that the red switch was off, Tenant will be charged for the service call.

Remove leaves and yard debris from around outdoor AC unit. Do not blow grass clippings into outdoor unit. Keep bushes and shrubs trimmed around outdoor unit. Make sure that pets do not urinate on the outside of the unit. This could result in a very expensive repair bill that will be billed to you.

**ELECTRIC STOVE:** If the whole stove is off, check the fuse or circuit breaker. Some stoves have a single reset switch on the back side of the appliance that can be switched to reset. If the oven will not turn on, try the broiler. If both will not turn on, check the timer. Instructions are normally on the face of the timer but generally one of the two clocks has a knob that will pop out if you are back to normal operation. Just turn the set knob until it pops out.

#### **SELF-CLEANING OVEN & CONTINUOUS CLEAN OVENS**

- Follow instructions printed on the oven or in the instruction manual. If you do not have the manual, “Google” the make and model of the stove for instructions.
- DO NOT use commercial cleaners.
- Remove racks before cleaning.
- Turn on kitchen ceiling fan and allow fresh air to circulate if possible

#### **GAS STOVES:**

##### **Clean the Burners**

Keep burners clean at all times on your gas stove, which is especially important since these types of stoves use an open flame. The flames can set particles of spilled food or other debris on fire and cause dangerous flare-ups. If you have drip pans and you have burned them, special order may be required. New drip pans must fit properly and be of good quality.

### **Keep Handles Turned to the Side**

Keep the handles of all pots and pans turned to the side, and never let them hang over the front edge. Since a gas stove heats directly with open flames, the entire pan can get hot, especially if the handles are made of metal. When handles protrude from the edge of the stove, they are more likely to be bumped accidentally and may even be knocked off the stovetop, causing burns and other injuries.

### **Pay Attention to Gas Odors**

If you smell an unusual odor around your kitchen, water heater, or furnace, which you can identify as gas, or you hear a hissing sound coming from the stove while it is not being used, you may have a gas leak. A gas leak can fill up the room quickly, and the slightest spark can set off an explosion that can seriously injure those in the immediate area. If you suspect the stove has a leak, leave the house immediately, and call 911 or your gas company to inspect your system before you use it again. Report any problem to the Property Manager.

**GLASS/CERAMIC ELECTRIC STOVE:** The actual cleaning process starts after you have finished your cooking. The first step in learning how to clean glass top stoves is watching the stove and making sure that you wait until the hot surface light has gone out. All glass top stoves have one and it is the light that tells you when the surface still has the potential to burn and melt. You can use a soapy water mixture and a sponge, although some non-abrasive cleaners can also work for the task. If you do this after every use, you will find that keeping it clean over long periods of time is very easy to do. You may also want to purchase polish specifically made for glass top stoves. This will allow you to keep your stove looking beautiful at the same time you keep it pristine. Do not use cast iron or aluminum pans. Do not place a hot lid down on the glass surface. These known issues can cause the glass to break.

**REFRIGERATORS:** Keep coils and grates free of dust and other debris. Keep seals/gaskets clean and free of mildew. The refrigerator *MUST* be kept running at all times. DO NOT use sharp instruments to defrost a manual type refrigerator. No-frost models will normally shut off for a period of time each day to perform their defrost function controlled by an internal timer. If you must move the refrigerator at any time, exercise extreme caution to avoid damage to the appliance or the floor for which you would be responsible. Change the water filter as directed and write the date on the new filter each time.

**DISHWASHER:** Use at least once each week. If used less, the seals may dry up and the motor may be ruined when put back into regular use. Do not allow steam or heat to vent out, this can cause damage to the countertop.

**STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES:** DO NOT USE STEEL WOOL PADS OR HARSH SCOURING POWDERS SUCH AS COMET. These will scratch the stainless steel surface. It is best to use a soft cloth using soap and water or specially formulated stainless steel cleaners found at many hardware and appliance stores; clean with the grain to avoid streaking.

**GRANITE COUNTERTOPS:** To keep granite countertops clean, use a microfiber cloth to dust off the surface. Wipe down the granite countertop daily, and as needed, using water. Once a week wipe down with a damp cloth and a stone cleaner formulated with a neutral pH. Never use harsh chemicals or abrasive cleaners. They can scratch, pit, and etch the surface of the stone. For oily stains, try a poultice made of a cup of flour or baking soda and 5 tablespoons of dish soap. Add water to make it the consistency of sour cream or yogurt. Place the solution directly on the stain and cover with plastic wrap overnight, before washing away the poultice. **Don't** use generic cleaning products such as bleach, glass cleaners, de-greasers, or other common household cleaners. These products that you buy at your local store contain acids, alkalis, and other chemicals that will degrade the granite sealer (and will etch marble) leaving the stone more vulnerable to staining. Always wipe up spills such as wine, grape juice, etc. to prevent staining.

**WASHER/DRYER:** Connections should be checked periodically to ensure that no leaking is occurring. Dryer filters should be cleaned after each use and the vent hose should be free of kinks or other restrictions. Damage to laundry equipment resulting from misuse or neglect will be your responsibility. Always turn off supply valves when away on vacation or other extended periods of time. Supply lines are always under pressure and a ruptured hose will cause extensive damage to your personal effects and the property. Follow all manufacture instructions for any and all washers and dryers (especially front-load or high efficiency washers).

**DRYER VENT:** It is very important that the dryer vent stays free and clear of all lint. All dryer vent hoses should be up to date with the city code. Contact the Property Manager if you have any concerns. If the dryer is getting hot, but the clothes are not drying, your dryer vent may be clogged. If the dryer does not vent directly outside, the Property Manager may require the Tenant to clean the dryer vent professionally annually and at the move out.

**GARBAGE DISPOSALS:** If motor buzzes, then stop - turn switch off. Un-jam the disposal by turning the blade backwards with a broom handle or wrench, if one is provided. Then reset the circuit breaker on the bottom of the disposal (small red button) and turn on. Call the Property Manager if a problem persists; however you may want to try and un-jam the disposal several times before calling.

**NOTE:** Garbage disposals are an extremely useful household tool. However, it is also an appliance we often take for granted. Sometimes we don't realize the damage we're causing it when we throw "everything and the kitchen sink" into it. Follow these guidelines to prolong the life of your garbage disposal.

**Do:**

- ◆ Insert food slowly. Stuffing it all into your disposal at once can cause clogs and shorten the life of your appliance
- ◆ Use cold water for at least 20 seconds. This will solidify grease so that it can be ground up. Also, make sure that all food particles are washed completely down the drain
- ◆ Cut larger items into smaller pieces and put them into the garbage disposal one at a time

**Don't:**

- ◆ Don't ever put your hand in the garbage disposal to remove a clog. Always use tongs.
- ◆ Don't use hot water. This will make grease liquefy and build up, which can clog the drain
- ◆ Don't grind fibrous or expandable foods. The former, like celery stalks and onion skins, can tangle up the disposal. The latter, like pasta and rice, can clog it
- ◆ Don't turn off the motor too quickly. You'll want to make sure all food particles are completely ground. Once done, continue to run the water for at least 15 seconds to flush out particles
- ◆ Don't wash coffee grounds down the drain. While they won't harm the disposal itself, they can clog pipes and drains

**Keep your garbage disposal clean. Here are some useful methods:**

- ◆ Pour a little dish soap and let the disposal run for a minute with cold water
- ◆ One good way to eliminate drain smells is by grinding citrus fruit peels
- ◆ Run it regularly! Infrequent use can cause rust and corrosion
- ◆ Grind certain hard foods like egg shells, ice cubes, or small fruit pits to clean disposal walls

**Never put the following items down your garbage disposal:**

- ◆ Animal bones
- ◆ Glass, plastic, metal, or paper
- ◆ Anything combustible
- ◆ Animal fat, grease, or cooking oil. These solidify in cold pipes and cause clogs
- ◆ Fibrous foods like corn husks or celery stalks. These can tangle and jam the motor
- ◆ Potato peels. The starch turns into a thick paste and makes the blades stick
- ◆ Expandable foods such as pasta and rice. They can expand in pipes and cause clogs
- ◆ Coffee grounds. They accumulate in drains and pipes
- ◆ Harsh chemicals, such as bleach or drain cleaners

**FIBERGLASS TUBS** Use "Soft Scrub" or other comparable cleanser on tubs and similar sinks and showers.

**PLUMBING:** The only items safe to put down the drains (sink, tub, shower, and toilet) of the Premises are human waste, and toilet paper. The following items are prohibited: paper towels, grease, tampons, sanitary napkins, food, personal "flushable" wipes, condoms, paint, toys, hair, and litter from pet waste. While the Owner is responsible to repair the plumbing systems when they wear out or break in the course of normal use, Tenant is responsible for repairs caused by Tenant's negligence. If Tenant puts any item down the drain other than human waste and toilet paper and causes a plumbing blockage, the resulting plumbing bill shall be paid by Tenant.

**Plumbing Tips:**

- ◆ Do not flush: CAT LITTER, PESTICIDES, CIGARETTE BUTTS, PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES, COFFEE GROUNDS, SANITARY NAPKINS, CONDOMS, FAT, GREASE, OIL, VARNISHES, PAINTS WASTE OILS, PAPER TOWELS, TAMPONS, DISPOSABLE DIAPERS, THINNERS, AND MEDICINES.
- ◆ Do not rinse hair down the drains. This can cause the hair to build up leading to a blockage. Tenant is responsible for any plumbing bill due to hair blocking the drain.
- ◆ The shower curtain should always be used in such a manner as to prevent any water leakage on to the walls or flooring.
- ◆ When using the bathtub, the water level should always be kept under the overflow drain.
- ◆ If Tenant notices any new discoloration on the vinyl flooring near a toilet, sink, bathtub, etc, Contact the Property Manager if this condition is not reported within a timely manner, the tenant may be held responsible for the repair/replacement of the flooring.

## **SEPTIC SYSTEMS:**

- ◆ DO use water saving fixtures - use sensible water conservation practices
- ◆ DO use the washing machine sparingly on a daily basis. Wash one (1) or two (2) loads daily rather than saving for a wash day
- ◆ DO maintain faucets and other fixtures on a regular basis, so that leaking does not occur when not in use.
- ◆ DON'T use excessive amounts of water in short periods of time
- ◆ DON'T dump grease or coffee grounds down the drain or dispose of household and automotive chemicals, insecticides, herbicides, or petroleum products in a drainfield system. Septic tank systems are not designed to decompose these materials
- ◆ DON'T dispose of sanitary napkins, disposable diapers, plastics, or synthetic rubber products
- ◆ DON'T use excessive amounts of drain cleaner, plumber's helper, yeast, bacteria, enzymes, etc. These materials are not good for the septic tank system and are normally a waste of money
- ◆ DON'T place bark, sawdust, or plastic mulch over drainfield systems
- ◆ DON'T place lawn irrigation systems on or contiguous to septic tank drainfields
- ◆ DON'T plant maple, weeping willow, sycamore, cottonwood, locust, or bamboo in or near a drainfield
- ◆ DON'T use the drainfield area for growing a vegetable garden
- ◆ DON'T park, place structures, cut and fill, or otherwise abuse the drainfield or the reserve drainfield or any area within 25' of the drainfield
- ◆ DON'T discharge back-flush water from water treatment equipment or swimming pools into a septic system. Sodium from this process causes soils to lose structure, which is essential to good percolation. Failure of the system will result from improper discharge from these systems

## **HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS**

The key to any disaster is preplanning and staying calm during and after the event. Being prepared is every individual's responsibility. Please remember that our office staff may be dealing with emergency needs. Take charge and plan now so you are ready to take action when the time comes. Advanced planning allows for fewer mistakes and greater safety for you and your family. Visit [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) for more information.

You should take the following actions in the event that a Hurricane Watch (a "watch" means a Hurricane may threaten our area within 36 hours) is announced:

- ◆ Remove all items from window sills or within close proximity
- ◆ Lower and close all shades and blinds
- ◆ Close all interior doors to minimize damage to the rest of the property
- ◆ Be prepared to remove perishables from the refrigerator, especially if you plan to evacuate the area
- ◆ Be prepared to shut off main electrical breaker, gas, and water supply especially if you will be evacuating
- ◆ DO NOT tape windows and sliding doors
- ◆ Take precautions to protect your personal property and ensure you have photos and inventory
- ◆ Have a plan for your pet(s). Pets are not allowed in most storm shelters
- ◆ Bring in all flower pots, bird feeders, grills, trash cans, lawn furniture, etc. These items can become airborne and cause injury or damage to the property
- ◆ Ensure that the gutters and downspouts are clear

The following actions should be taken after the hurricane strikes:

- ◆ Look for water stains on the ceiling and walls
- ◆ Look at the roof from the ground level from each side of the house to determine if there are any loose, broken, or missing shingles, torn pipe collars (where the pipe sticks up through the roof), or debris on the roof, in roof valleys, behind the chimney, or in the gutters.
- ◆ Go into the attic with a bright flashlight to look for dark stains which indicate a leak and look into any storage areas as well
- ◆ If any of the mechanical equipment (furnaces, air conditioners, water heaters, pumps etc) was submerged in water the equipment may not work and could be dangerous to operate.
- ◆ Please contact the Property Manager before attempting to operate any potentially water logged equipment and to advise of any damage made to the property.

## **SPRING AND SUMMER REMINDERS**

- ◆ Keep your yard maintained. Cut the grass, trim the hedges, weed the flower beds, and make sure gutters are clean
- ◆ Replace air conditioner filters every 30 days
- ◆ Change your smoke detector batteries and test each detector monthly
- ◆ Open your crawlspace vents unless directed otherwise by the Property Manager
- ◆ Use an enzyme treatment in your septic tank every 30 days
- ◆ Have your carpets professionally cleaned
- ◆ Clean ashes from fireplace See Page 9

## **FALL AND WINTER REMINDERS**

- ◆ Keep your gutters clean
- ◆ Close your crawlspace vents unless directed otherwise by the Property Manager
- ◆ Rake your leaves, pine straw, and acorns, and remove them from the Premises
- ◆ Don't run out of heating oil
- ◆ Have your chimneys professionally cleaned before using for the season
- ◆ Change your smoke detector batteries and test each one monthly
- ◆ Change your furnace filters monthly
- ◆ Disconnect water hoses and turn off the water leading to outdoor faucets
- ◆ Do not use supplemental heating devices, especially kerosene heaters
- ◆ Keep temperatures inside the house at least 55 degrees. Night or day and even when you are away from the house.
- ◆ Close all storm windows.
- ◆ Promptly remove snow and ice from walkways.
- ◆ Do not walk on snow covered or frozen flower beds.
- ◆ Once snow has completely melted, clean off all leftover salt.

## **PRECAUTIONS DURING FREEZING WEATHER**

- ◆ Always leave the heat on. Even when you are out of town to avoid a pipe freeze. Recommended temp of 60 degrees.
- ◆ Close the crawl space vents found around the bottom of the exterior walls of the house.
- ◆ Let both hot and cold faucets run slowly on extremely cold nights and open cabinet doors to allow warm air around the pipes.
- ◆ Well pumps must have water drained from system prior to freezing weather. Some may be disconnected and stored in garage or shed.