

TIPS FOR TENANTS

Self-disclosure

Prior to the conclusion of a tenancy contract the following documents of the tenant are usually required:

- ID card or passport
- Visa/residence permit
- Self-disclosure (questionnaire to be filled with personal details of everyone who will be living in the apartment, incl. income)
- Income statement (e.g. pay slips, scholarship certificate)
- Confirmation of your current landlord that there are no rent arrears

Rental agreement

To rent an apartment, a contract is set up and signed by the landlord and the tenant, forming the basis of the lease. The lease can be either for a limited or an unlimited time. Leases of unfurnished accommodation are generally unlimited with a three-month period of notice for both parties and a minimal rental period of one or two years.

The tenancy contract describes and sets out:

- Location and size of the apartment
- Number and type of rooms (also cellar)
- Amount of basic rent
- Amount of additional general costs and costs for heating and water (operating costs)

The tenancy contract also regulates:

- When rent must be paid (at the latest on the 3rd workday of the month)
- When and how the contract can be terminated and the apartment handed back over to the landlord
- Cosmetic repairs and maintenance of the flat

The TU Dresden Welcome Center is happy to provide more information via web or appointment.

E-mail: welcome.center@tu-dresden.de // Web: www.welcomecenter.tu-dresden.de //

Blog: www.ddcwelcome.de

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Rent

Rents are calculated with respect to the apartment's size in square meters, independent of the number of rooms. Although advertisements will of course include the number of rooms (not bedrooms) in an apartment, the rent will be calculated per square meter.

The total rent or "warm rent" ("Warmmiete") comprises two parts: „Kaltmiete“ (cold rent) and "Nebenkosten/Betriebskosten" (running costs) such as garbage disposal, street and house cleaning and lighting costs, maintenance cost of common areas such as lifts, and above all, utility costs such as heating and water costs.

Running costs

The general operating costs and costs for heating and water are shown in the tenancy contract as a lump sum to be paid monthly. The general operating costs comprise in particular:

- Costs of heating and warm water supply
- Cold water and sewage costs and the rainwater draining
- Garbage disposal
- Property tax and building insurance
- Costs of cleaning the building and adjoining street/sidewalk
- Staff cost of the caretaker/janitor/gardener (if applicable)
- Costs for lighting the building or for the lift (if applicable)

Some of the running costs depend on the apartment's number of occupants and their personal usage, e.g. parts of the heating, water and wastewater costs, while others are calculated depending on the size of the apartment.

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Every apartment has metering devices to determine the occupants' usage. The meters for water and heating costs are read annually (usually in January) and the real costs according to usage are calculated on that basis and compared to the pre-payment made. The result of the calculation – credit balance or additional claims – is communicated to the tenant in an annual bill which usually arrives during the calendar year following the calculated year. It is wise to keep track of your usage and write down metering readings regularly. If you find a mistake in the annual bill, you should object to it in writing within 4 weeks of receiving the bill. Electricity is usually paid separately, directly to the electricity provider. Internet providers are also usually contracted and paid separately.

Security deposit

The rent deposit is paid by the tenant to the landlord as a security for potential claims, e.g. compensation for damages or unsettled rent or utility arrears. It must not exceed 3 "cold" rents. The security deposit must generally be paid in one sum at the beginning of the lease, unless you find a different agreement with the landlord in advance. It will be paid back completely after moving out, if the tenant has not caused any damage during the tenancy and was not behind schedule in payments of the rent (including costs for utilities). Otherwise the landlord's claims will be set off against the rent deposit and the rest will be paid back. For returning the deposit the landlord, as a rule, can take up to 6 months (after the end of the contract) to check any claims against the tenant. He can also keep up to one third of the deposit until it is time for the annual bill for utility usage of the year past.

Hand over

During hand over a hand-over report is filled out, containing a record of:

- The results of the reading of water and electricity meters and of the heat cost allocators
- Which and how many keys were handed out to the tenant
- Prior damages in the flat, if there are any

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Please take a close look at your new flat. The hand-over report is signed by you as a tenant and by the building manager/janitor as the representative of the landlord. You receive a copy of it. All previous damages should be recorded in the report, otherwise the landlord can charge you for them if they are only discovered when you move out.

Rest time

In Germany statutory periods of rest („Ruhezeiten“) are instituted and observed. General times of rest are Monday through Saturday between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. during the day and between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. at night and all day Sunday. Disturbing those quiet hours is regarded (almost) as a form of sacrilege (like breaking a holy rule). Avoid loud noises such as drilling, sawing, hammering, loud conversations/phone calls, turning up your stereo or playing music during those quiet times. Kindly inform your neighbours and guests in advance if you are planning a party during a “quiet time” (e.g. in the evening).

Garbage separation

Garbage separation is mandatory. Every neighbourhood has local containers for paper and/or glass bottles. Do not throw these materials into your regular garbage (see our leaflet “Waste Separation“). In addition, your landlord provides two or three different garbage bins for the tenants. They are usually picked up once a week.

Please note that a system is in place for returning empty plastic and glass bottles to points of sale. A small deposit (25ct for plastic, 8-15ct for glass) is paid for bottles when you first buy them. This deposit is refunded to you when you return the bottle. The deposit will be lost, if those bottles are put in the garbage.