



Kenosha Landlord Association

A Local Chapter of the Wisconsin Apartment Association

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In this issue

The Secret Rental	Page 2
1 Reason Tenants do not Renew Their Lease	Page 3
Wisconsin Legal Blank	Page 3
Texting Tenants: Practical and Legal Considerations	Page 4
Best Tenant Guest Policy	Page 5-6
Landlord/Crime Free	Page 5
Kenosha Landlord Association Application	Page 6
Samurai Sudoku	Page 7
Associate Members	Page 8
Membership Meeting Information	Page 9



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www.kenoshalandlordassociation.org
www.waaonline.org

To Our Members

Many thanks to officers Leo “Lee” Viola and Lorn Anschutz from the Kenosha Gang Crimes Unit who were our featured speakers at last month’s meeting. KLA members were apprised of the current gang activity in Kenosha, where it is most prevalent and steps you can take to ensure your rental properties remain gang free. According to the officers, 90% of Kenosha gang members are residing in rental units.

Our next meeting, on Wednesday, July 15th, will feature Attorney Timothy Evans. Attorney Evans will be discussing the new 2015 eviction laws and the changes that landlords need to be aware of to stay in compliance. If you haven’t updated your eviction information in a while, this is a meeting you won’t want to miss.

Meeting: Wednesday, July 15th at the Fireside Restaurant and Lounge, 2801 30th Ave. Appetizers and networking at 6:30 pm. Meeting begins promptly at 7:00 pm.

DISCLAIMER: The Kenosha Landlord Association publishes this newsletter to create awareness of issues relating to the rental housing industry. Information is compiled from a variety of sources and the views and concerns expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the Association. When necessary, we suggest you consult an attorney.



The Secret Rental

Source: <http://www.rentalpropertyreporter.com>



Are you keeping a secret? If that two-line classified ad you ran in the newspaper is lost among the other 2-bedroom ads, you might be keeping a secret. If the For Rent sign in front of your property is so small no one can see it more than 20 feet away and is covered by overgrown grass and shrubbery, you might be keeping a secret. If you are waiting patiently for “the right person” to show up, you might be keeping a secret. In fact, if you are doing any or all of those things, you may be joining the numerous landlords with a similar secret-keeping ability.

We want the place rented. There are dozens of ways to avoid keeping a secret of our rental properties. But let’s just look at the three I just mentioned.

First are those classified ads. If your properties are in larger cities, the cost of a two-line classified ad can be upwards of \$100 for a weekend, assuming you are even allowed to run just two lines. Some newspapers I checked have a four-line minimum. Of course, four lines have more impact than two lines, but not if it is in the midst of other similar four-line ads. Do properties get exposure from a two- to four-line ad buried among the others? Yes, but is it enough exposure to avoid it being in the “keeping a secret” category? The problem is, the cost of those ads is a big hit and a few weeks of them can use up a month’s rent. So for the actual return on the ads, we are almost stuck keeping a secret.

A better choice is one or more of the online rental ad sites. The newspapers have taken a huge hit from those internet sites because so many people use the internet to look for rental properties. And they are a boon to landlords as well as tenants. Craigslist, for example is free in most cities and you allows you as much copy and as many photos as you want. Others are inexpensive. Rent.com and allows as many photos as you want. Rentalads.com provides unlimited listings and up to 12 photos along with email alerts to tenants who have expressed an interest in your type of property. Check with other sites to see what they charge.

With an online ad, it’s harder to keep the secret of your rental. But when you run an ad on those sites, figure out which site is providing you with the most traffic, letting your secret out most effectively.

I know money is tight. But is it so tight that you can’t afford a For Rent sign that someone can actually see and pay attention to? I know, Home Depot gets \$9.00 for a sign 18 by 24 inches. They do have a cheaper one for 97 cents that is 8 by 12 inches. Then you nail it to a piece of wood and pound it into the ground. We have two issues here. First is the sign, of course, and second is the fact that it may be hiding among overgrown grass and weeds.

Good tenants like to rent from good landlords. Two ways they judge who they consider to be good landlords is by the professionalism of the marketing and the way the property looks. A professional-looking sign tells prospective tenants that this landlord is a professional. But a messy property it tells prospective tenants that the landlord doesn’t care about the property thus negating the message sent by the professional sign. That, interestingly enough, also tells bad tenants that the property is an ideal place to start looking.

Of course, a poorly maintained property and yard is no secret. But a sign that requires searching in the front of the property is a secret, which brings us to the third way of keeping a secret.

Some landlords, many of whom have been in the business for decades, apparently have a magical power to determine a good tenant just by talking to him or her. They also believe that “the right person” will show up and be eager to rent his or her vacant property. For those of us who are landlords who do not have that magical power, who have no wands to wave and crystal balls to consult to determine the quality of tenants and when they will show up, we need to get the word out as many ways as we possibly can. We ought not to be keeping secrets.

All of that means conscious marketing. Conscious marketing means taking advantage of any and all opportunities to avoid keeping the secret about our outstanding property, the one that any good tenant would be proud to call home. Run ads that someone will notice in places people look. Put a professional-looking sign in the front yard. Make sure it’s no secret that you have a property available.



#1 REASON TENANTS DO NOT RENEW THEIR LEASE

Source: <http://www.mrlandlord.com/>

Business check-up question for the day? Do you have an "effective" maintenance response system in place? The number one reason that tenants do not renew their leases is poor response and execution for service requests from the landlord.

Today's tenants expect a constant inspection, repair, and preservation of the general conditions of their rental home. This also includes a timely repair or replacement of parts for appliances. Everything has to be in working order and problems must be addressed quickly and courteously.

To facilitate an efficient delivery of maintenance requests, the property manager's best method of receiving these requests is having someone actually answering the telephone. When you are too busy to actually answer the phone or respond promptly to email or text messages even if the request comes at an odd hour, many landlords and managers utilize apartment call centers or virtual property assistants. These types of resources allows properties to always have a human responding to the needs of their tenants. It's good to use an industry specific call center or virtual assistant and for you or them to have a direct, open communication with key maintenance individuals that you have already lined up in advance to handle almost any maintenance issue that could arise.

Additionally maintenance requests should be supported by a shared calendar or software program that documents the request cycle: creation, delivery, execution, completion and follow-up. Response to maintenance requests, if implemented properly, can make a BIG difference in your resident retention, property upkeep, reduce liability risks and greatly increase your overall cash flow! On the other hand, a poor maintenance response system can create severe problems that can quickly force you out of the rental property business far short of your financial dreams. Take a critical look this week at the maintenance response system you have in place and fine-tune it where necessary.



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PRINTING & FORMS

Wisconsin Legal Blank Co., Inc.
<http://www.wilegalblank.com/>
Rick Russell - 414.344.5155
rick@wilegalblank.com

- 11 NEW RENTAL FORMS

Approved Rental Forms conforming –ACT 76 Mandatory March 1, 2014

Wisconsin Legal Blank Printing and Forms has provided it's customers with high quality pre-printed and custom forms for over 100 years. We are constantly keeping up-to-date and ahead of Rental and Real Estate regulations, government changes to forms, renovation literature, and EPA safety mandated requirements.



Texting Tenants: Practical and Legal Considerations

Source: [http:// www.rentingmyhouse.net /](http://www.rentingmyhouse.net/) Apr, 2015



Text messaging in a tenant or prospective tenant is a convenient way to communicate. It can be done quickly without having to wait for someone to answer, leave a message or wait for a callback and without having to engage in conversation. It can be done without drafting, printing and delivering a letter. In short, you can pass the ball with minimal hassle.

Receiving a text is also convenient. Phone calls interrupt activities and checking voice mail requires dialing into a voice mail system and listening to the message. A text message can also be saved, forwarded and easily accessed if it contains useful information.

Clearly texting has some practical applications for property managers, landlords and tenants. However, the key to texting with tenants is to know when sending a text, rather than making a phone call or sending a letter, could get you in trouble.

Establish Guidelines for Texting with Tenants

When you're signing a lease, make sure to discuss your preferred communication methods, including texting, with your tenants, so that you're all on the same page. When it comes to texting, put the following guidelines in place.

Make sure the tenant is able and willing to receive text messages. Some people don't have cell phones, or if they do, they don't use them often. Others have no texting plan. And some people don't want to communicate by texting. If a tenant doesn't want to receive text messages from you, respect his or her wishes.

Put it in writing. The lease agreement or some other document signed by the tenant should contain a checkbox for the tenant to indicate he or she is willing to receive text messages and a section for the tenant to write in his or her mobile number.

Specify what you will be texting to the tenant. Put it in writing the information you will be texting to the tenant. Text messages are informal. Limit them to emergency repair situations when you can't call each tenant or when you have reports of suspicious criminal activity in the area. Also, use text messages for simple reminders about upcoming due dates, meetings or scheduled repairs and maintenance for which you have already given written notice. Limit yourself to these situations – don't send a text soliciting for donations to your favorite worthy cause and don't overload the tenant with too many texts.

Specify what the tenant can text to you. Limit what information the tenant may text to you. For example, texts requesting repairs or maintenance and consenting to allowing maintenance staff to enter the unit might be appropriate.

Know When to Avoid Texting a Tenant

There are some situations where texting isn't the right tool for communication. For example:

Don't text formal written notices to a tenant. If you are giving a tenant a notice that is required by statute to be in writing, (such as a notice you need to enter the premises or terminate the lease), do not text it. If a notice doesn't meet the statutory requirements for proper form and delivery, the tenant can claim that the notice was improper and that he or she need not comply.

Don't text information if you might need a paper trail. If you suspect that you may need to keep a record that a certain communication was delivered, make sure the communication is on paper and delivered appropriately. Text messages are not legal documents. They are easily (and sometimes accidentally) deleted. Furthermore, text messages can't be printed out and easily presented to a judge and they may not hold up in court.

Don't send text messages that convey anger or frustration. Always keep text messages professional and devoid of negative emotion. If you have a difficult situation with a tenant, a phone call or an in-person conversation is probably better than a short text message. As with email, when you send a text message, the person on the receiving end doesn't see your facial expressions or body language, which can give them an incomplete picture of the intent of the communication. Remember that if you might need a paper trail, send the tenant a letter or follow up the conversation with a letter.

Texting tenants can be an efficient way to communicate, saving property managers time and money. If you know when and when not to use a text, it can be a valuable tool.



Best Tenant Guest Policy

Source: <http://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org/>

Every tenant will want to have a guest over from time to time. But that seemingly simple practice can easily give rise to problems for a landlord.

What if the guest is disruptive, dangerous, or violates house rules? And what if they become a more permanent fixture to the rental property.

The problem stems from the fact that a landlord has no idea who the guest is, nor how much access they have been given. Do they have a key? Access to security codes? In multi-family, the landlord has to look out for the safety of other tenants. And in single-family properties, the landlord has to consider occupancy standards, possible damage or theft, and complaints from the neighbors.

The best tenant guest policy is to anticipate the problem and lay out the rules –and possible consequences, in the lease. You'll want to consider some of the following points:

Prohibit tenants from giving security access to guests.

Tell tenants where guests can park if that is an issue.

State any restrictions on how many guests can be in the rental property at one time.

Are there noise, smoking rules?

The words “tenant will be evicted” should appear to warn the tenant they must keep all guests under control, and are responsible for any damage or disruptions their guests create.

How long can an overnight guest stay before they become more than a guest?

Continued on page 6

Landlord/Crime Free Multi-Housing Rental Seminar

**Saturday October 3th (9am-2pm)
Saturday October 10th (9am-2pm)**

*Location: Boys and Girls Club
1330 52nd St.
Kenosha, WI 53140*

The KPD Crime Prevention Unit and the Kenosha Landlord Association designed this Seminar to help landlords make better decisions when managing their rental units.

The following topics will be discussed:

- Property Maintenance Codes
- Crime Prevention Techniques
- Applicant Screening
- Leases and Evictions
- Crime Free Lease Addendums
- Process Serving
- C.P.T.E.D. (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)
- Fire Safety
- Waste and Disposal



To register for the seminar please call:
Crime prevention Unit at 657-3937
or e-mail: watch@kenoshapolice.com.

Coffee, soda, water, and lunch will be provided!!!!!!!!

**This seminar will help landlords
and
property managers
in
the following ways:**

- Satisfied tenants build stable neighborhoods
- Active management leads to less turnover
- Stabilized property values and rents
- Lower maintenance and repair costs
- Everyone is safer
- Peace of mind from spending less time on crisis control.

**Come and learn about all of the
new laws!!!!!!**

Best Tenant Guest Policy (Con't)



Prohibit the tenant from moving anyone else in without your express permission — avoid the “I thought you knew” defense.

If the guest stays on, include provisions in the lease that allow the landlord to approve the new resident, including a requirement that the newbie fill out a rental application and agree to a tenant background check — just like a tenant. Let them know the house rules.

Other rights you may have as the landlord — like raising rent for the new occupant, will depend on the laws in your state or city, so check with an attorney first, then disclose those rules in the lease.

There is always the opportunity to renegotiate the lease and add the new occupant as a tenant. That provides rights to the landlord to collect rent against any of the tenants, but also gives rights to the new occupant, so consider the big picture.

The safest bet is to enforce the guest policies uniformly so that a tenant doesn't allege discrimination. You wouldn't want to allow male tenants to have short-term guests with no hassles, but get on the case of a woman who is doing the same thing— so plan ahead and develop policies geared toward protecting the property and the safety of other tenants.



KENOSHA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION

WHAT IS THE KLA

The Kenosha Landlord Association was established to promote and foster a *Network of Real Estate Investors* in the areas of:

Investing, Management, Legal Issues, and Continuing Education.

GOALS

KLA's goal is to keep our members up-to-date with the most current information available to our industry, which will enable our members to provide the highest quality rental

WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

MEMBERSHIPS INCLUDE...

- Wisconsin Apartment Association Membership
- KLA Monthly Newsletter
- Wisconsin Apt. Assoc. Newsletter
- Network with all KLA members
- Monthly Association Meetings
- Business Members Discounts
- Educational Seminars
- Political Lobbyist

Educational Topics:

- Eviction Process
- Fair Housing
- Financing Methods
- Lead Paint Issues
- Legal Issues
- State & Local Issues
- Tenant Screening

Membership Costs

\$180.00 Annual

FILL OUT & MAIL IN TO BECOME A MEMBER

Application

Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

(H) Phone: _____

(W) Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Number of Units: _____

How did you hear about the Association? _____

Do you own a business? _____

Do you wish to advertise to our members? _____

**To join, please mail application and
Check to:**

KLA
P.O. Box 1505
Kenosha, WI 53141



Kenosha Landlord Association

P.O. Box 1505

Kenosha, Wisconsin 53141

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Next Meeting

**Fireside Restaurant
& Lounge**

2801 30th Ave.

(262) 551-0600

Membership Meetings
are held on the
3rd Wednesday of the month

July 15, 2015

6:30 p.m. networking

7:00 p.m. meeting

Appetizers & Networking at 6:30 pm Meeting at 7 pm

***Attorney
Timothy Evans***

www.kenoshalordassociation.org

Free Appetizers and Beverages Provided At Meetings