



# Kenosha Landlord Association

A Local Chapter of the Wisconsin Apartment Association

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December 2014

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Happy Holidays

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**Kenosha Landlord Association, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 1505,  
Kenosha, WI 53141

[www.kenoshalordassociation.org](http://www.kenoshalordassociation.org)

## To Our Members

December is here and we are concluding another successful year. We thank you for your support and for renewing your membership for 2015. With all of us working together it only helps to make the KLA a stronger and more vibrant organization.

All members are invited to attend the board meetings and get involved in the various committees. Each of your voices are important, and we want to hear from you! Remember to tell your landlord friends about our organization and encourage them to join the KLA. On January 21<sup>st</sup> we will be hosting the KLA Holiday Party. At that time we will also introduce the 2015 Board of Directors. You can find an invitation with all the details in the newsletter.

Please note that there will be **no membership meeting in December**. Our next membership meeting will be on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at the VFW, 6618 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



Have a safe and festive holiday!!!



**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.

# Christmas Safety Tips for Landlords and Their Tenants



Source: realestateblog.com

Landlords are always concerned about safety issues in their investment property. But there is no better time than during the holidays, to remind your tenants of some basic steps they can take to keep themselves and the property they live in safe. Holiday decorations present many "opportunities" for landlords to encounter additional liability. Here are some Christmas Safety Tips for you.

### Indoor Christmas Lights

Indoor Christmas lights should be replaced every 3-4 years for safety however most of us tend to keep them a lot longer than that. Those tiny wires can be easily damaged from normal use. Before you put any lights on the tree, they should be inspected for broken and cracked sockets, frayed, bare or damaged wires and loose connections. Never use more than 3 strings of lights per extension cord as this presents a definite fire hazard. Christmas lights are relatively inexpensive so go ahead and change them out every few years for fire safety reasons. Be sure to remind your tenants to always turn off the Christmas lights when they leave.

### Exterior Christmas Lights

Tenants that decorate their homes with exterior lights can expose their landlord to some serious liability. Many people are injured from roof falls and shocks every year when they get up on the roof to decorate. Just walking on the roof in very cold conditions can damage the shingles on the roof. When using exterior Christmas lights, always be sure that the lights and any extension cords are certified for exterior use and that they are plugged into GFCI protected outlets.

### Chimneys and Fireplaces

As a landlord, if you have a property with a wood burning fireplace, be sure to have the flue cleaned annually. Creosote occurs naturally from burning wood. If it gets to be a quarter inch thick or thicker inside the chimney, it's a fire hazard as it can ignite and cause a chimney fire. Be sure to caution your tenants not to throw wrapping paper in the fireplace. Those materials tend to get very hot as they burn and they can cause flash fires.

Continued on page 3

## Kenosha Landlord Association Membership Application & Associate Membership Application



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# Christmas Safety Tips for Landlords and Their Tenants (con't)



## Candles

People love candles, but candles pose a serious fire risk if they are not handled properly. Most fires started by candles are a result of them being forgotten or being placed too close to something that is flammable. With a little caution, most all fires started by candles could be prevented.

## Facts and Figures

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has some sobering statistics I would like to pass onto everyone that has rental property.

- Christmas trees are responsible for 300 fires annually which result in 30 injuries, 10 deaths and \$10,000,000 in property damage.
- There are 12,500 injuries every year from roof falls and shocks associated with the installation of exterior Christmas Lights.
- Candles start about 11,600 fires annually which result in 1200 injuries, 150 deaths and \$173,000,000 in property loss.

No one wants to get *“that call”*; the one telling you that someone has been injured on your property or that he house has sustained serious damage from a fire. Take a few minutes this busy holiday season to give your tenants a little reminder of these simple but important safety tips.

**Avoid the 12 Dangers of Christmas**  
brought to you by ESFi

- Do not use electronics near water.
- Never sleep with electronics under your pillow.
- Keep batteries safely stored in their packaging; they can be deadly if swallowed.
- Do not leave space heaters unattended when in use.
- Keep decorations at least 3 feet away from any open flame.
- Never play with fire.
- Do not run cords under carpets, rugs, furniture, or out of windows.
- Do not overload outlets.
- Sometimes less is more; be careful not to over decorate.
- Always turn off decorations when you're sleeping or leaving your home.
- Inspect all decorations and discard any that are damaged or worn.
- Keep your natural Christmas tree hydrated and water it daily.

## Biennial Inspection Reminder

Source: KHA News

This is a reminder that we are now doing biennial inspections to increase efficiency and make the inspection process easier for the landlords and tenants. We are looking to begin this for 2015 with our July 1, 2014 reexaminations. However, we at the KHA want to make sure that landlords understand that the implementation of biennial inspections will rely on the fact that the annual inspections must pass on the first inspection scheduled. Some owners wait until the KHA comes out to see what needs to be fixed. Should that be the case, the unit will not be eligible for the biennial inspection procedure and will have annual inspections.

Inspections ensure that the HCV Program units have adequate living space for the individual or family, are structurally sound, provide the necessary habitability systems such as electricity, plumbing, heating, appliances, ect. and present NO conditions that endanger the health and safety of tenants.

## Winter Reminders for Landlords

Source: KHA News

**Wisconsin Statutes 704.06 water heater thermostat settings:** A landlord of premises which are subject to a residential tenancy and served by a water heater shall set the thermostat of that water at no higher than **125 degrees Fahrenheit** before any new tenant occupies that premises or at the minimum setting of that water heater if the minimum setting is higher than 125 degrees Fahrenheit. **Heating:** All Habitable room, kitchen and bathrooms shall be provided with a permanently connected heating system complying with Chapter 30 (Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Code) Refer to Sec. 30.03(1) and Sec. 30.04(d). The heating system shall be maintained in a safe and efficient condition by a qualified person and a record kept at the premises showing the date of service and by whom. **A minimum temperature of sixty-seven degrees Fahrenheit (67°) shall be maintained in all habitable rooms, kitchens and bathrooms.** If your rental properties have storm windows, make sure they are properly installed and completely closed. Install plastic window film kits on windows that are leaky or that don't have storms. Install covers on window and through the wall air conditioners for energy efficiency. Also remember to replace furnace filters and check on humidity settings in preparation for winter. During the winter months, it will feel warmer if the air is not too dry. Maintain the relative humidity between 20 percent and 40 percent can make a 67 degree apartment feel much warmer. Ensure that all driveways and walkways are salted and snow/ice is removed.

**Landlord/Crime Free  
Multi-Housing Rental Seminar**  
**Saturday January 10th (9:00am-2:00pm)**  
**Saturday January 17th (9:00am-12:00pm)**

*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](mailto: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!!!!!!**

# Christmas Soduko

Answer key page 9

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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.

## Lease vs. Rental Agreement: Which to Choose?

Source: landlordology.com/Chris Brasher on November 17, 2014

If you've been a landlord for more than a year, you've probably noticed that not all renters desire the same type of arrangement. Some renters may just be in-between the buying/selling process, awaiting a job relocation, or even remodeling. Although most renters are used to 12-month leases, landlords may want to consider other options depending on the needs of the unit, timing, and audience.

So, your situation may behoove you to know the difference between a lease and a rental agreement.

### Why Would I Choose a Rental Agreement?

A **rental agreement**, also known as a periodic rental agreement, is generally a month-to-month contract; however, some agreements can be as short as a few days or weeks. Once the agreement expires, one of the following three things can happen:

1. The agreement is automatically renewed and payment is due.
2. The landlord may request adjustments to the agreement like increase/decrease the rental price or other policy changes.
3. The tenant is required to vacate the unit.

In most cases, a notice to vacate is still required when either party would like to end the agreement. The notice period is usually defined by your rental agreement or local laws in a month-to-month agreement.

### Oral Agreements; Allowed, but Not Recommended

Oral rental agreements are also permissible; however, these are best avoided for liability reasons. Some states, such as California, suggest that written agreements be made if the rental is for more than nine months, pets are on the premise, or previous agreements have been made on utilities or landscaping.

When in doubt, get it in writing. However, even if your agreement is not in writing, tenants still have certain rights, such as an implied warranty of habitability and quiet enjoyment.

*So, why would I want a rental agreement? For landlords, isn't a long-term commitment more desirable?*

**The answer isn't always so clear.** Rental agreements provide landlords more flexibility if, for example, you think you may need to occupy the unit or start renovations when a contractor is available. A rental agreement also gives you the flexibility to charge different prices depending on the season. For example, some units in Florida rent for twice as much during the winter than summer. A short-term agreement is also attractive to some renters who have short-term needs, such as students or those who have moved to your city for only a short-term work assignment, which allows you to charge a premium for this flexibility.

**Why Would I Choose a Lease? A lease gives the renter the right to live in a dwelling for a fixed period of time — usually 12 months. Both the landlord and renter are required to fulfill the terms of the lease for the stated period.**

For example, many landlords include a clause forces the renter to be responsible for finding someone to take over the lease if he or she needs to move. Likewise, a landlord cannot raise the rental price unless it is stated within the lease.

*Why are leases attractive?* The major advantage of a lease is the ability to rent the unit at a known price for a known period of time. Both renters and landlords feel comfortable with this security. The primary comfort for the landlord is that renters can't leave the unit at a moment's notice without fulfilling the terms of the lease.

**Still Unsure?** If you're still trying to decide what to offer, consider this: leases are great for tenants looking to create a "home"; whereas, a rental agreement is for tenants looking for something more temporary.

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You're invited to the  
Kenosha Landlord Association  
**Holiday Party !!**

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7:00pm  
Cocktails at 6:30 pm

Location: Birchwood Grill  
7515 125th Street  
Kenosha, WI

**Dinner includes:** Dinner Entrée (buffet selection), salad, bread basket, dessert, and choice of coffee, hot tea or soda. Tip is included in the cost. \*\* Please note there will be a Cash Bar. \*\*

The cost is **\$10/person** for a delicious meal at the Birchwood Grill Restaurant. Please complete the form below and send with a check payable to: **Kenosha Landlord Association P.O. Box 1505 Kenosha, WI 53141**

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Deadline to sign-up is January 2, 2015 - No exceptions!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Kenosha Landlord Association  
2013-2014 Annual Holiday Party

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7:00pm

Location: Birchwood Grill



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Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Kenosha Landlord Association  
2013-2014 Annual Holiday Party

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7:00pm

Location: Birchwood Grill





**Kenosha Landlord Association**

**P.O. Box 1505**

**Kenosha, Wisconsin 53141**

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***No Meeting in December***

Kenosha Landlord Association

**Holiday Party !!**

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7:00pm  
Cocktails at 6:30 pm

**[www.kenoshalandlordassociation.org](http://www.kenoshalandlordassociation.org)**

*Free Food Or Snacks Provided At Meetings*