

the landlord a key within 48 hours or as soon as possible, and the landlord has the right to replace the altered lock (MGO 32.05(2)). Furthermore, under some circumstances, Wis. Stat. 704.16(4) requires the landlord to change the locks or allow the tenant to do so, within 48 hours of being notified that the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence or child abuse. The tenant can be required to pay for the cost of changing the locks (Wis. Stat. 704.16(4)).

Other Useful Information

Notice Required Before Landlord Entry

According to City of Madison ordinances, the landlord or any agents of the landlord must give a 24-hour notice before entering your apartment to make repairs or to inspect. (MGO 32.05(1)). **For entry to show an apartment the landlord only has to give 12 hours notice unless the lease says otherwise.** (In an emergency, the 24-hour or 12-hour notice is not required.) If your landlord is entering without notice, at unreasonable times or for an inappropriate purpose, notify the landlord in writing that you request proper notification before entry. If the person entering without notice is a resident manager or an off-site manager, but not the owner, send a copy of the letter to the person's supervisor or the actual owner of the property. If unauthorized entry continues, and makes you feel unsafe, call the police to file a report. The police can issue a \$600 fine for the first offense for unauthorized entry, and \$1000 for the second, if a tenant calls and cites MGO 1.08(3)(a) and lets the police know that they have "bail deposit authority."

Some information in this flyer is adapted from "Security Awareness Checklist" courtesy of J&K Lock and Security Professionals and the Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin.

Safe Housing Act

The Safe Housing Act (2007 Wisconsin Act 184) provides that under limited circumstances, a tenant may terminate a tenancy if there is an imminent threat to his/her safety by remaining on the premises. The law allows victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or child abuse to terminate a tenancy if they or their children are in imminent physical danger and have an accepted form of documentation of the abuse, such as an injunction. This law allows landlords to terminate the tenancy of the tenant who is named in the injunction or court order as the person committing the abuse, assault or stalking. This law is very detailed about the types of circumstances that allow a tenancy to be terminated, so please refer directly to the law for more information, and seek legal assistance if necessary (Wis. Stats. 704.16).

The Safe Housing Act also says that a rental agreement is void and unenforceable if it allows a landlord to increase rent, decrease services, bring an action for eviction, refuse to renew, or to threaten any of these actions because a tenant has contacted law enforcement or emergency services for their safety (Wis. Stats. 704.44).



Funded in part by the Associated Students of Madison. ASM does not necessarily endorse the beliefs or actions of this organization.



Updated 1/12

The **Tenant Resource Center** is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to promoting positive relations between rental housing consumers and providers throughout Wisconsin. By providing information and referrals, education about rental rights and responsibilities, and access to conflict resolution, we empower the community to obtain and maintain quality affordable housing.

Apartment Safety in the City of Madison



Tenant Resource Center

1202 Williamson St. #102, Madison, WI 53703
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday
www.tenantresourcecenter.org

Rental Rights (608) 257-0006
asktrc@tenantresourcecenter.org

En Español (608) 237-8913

Toll-free (877) 238 RENT (7368)

Mediation (608) 257-2799

Business Line/TTY (608) 257-0143

Tenant Resource Center Campus Office

Student Activity Center
ASM Office - Room 4301
(608) 561-3727

uw@tenantresourcecenter.org

Housing Help Desk

1819 Aberg Ave. Room 2
Madison, WI 53704

(Dane County Job Center)

(608) 242-7406, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats, or other accommodations, call our office at (608) 257-0143.

No part of this brochure should be regarded as legal advice or considered a replacement of a landlord's or tenant's responsibility to be familiar with the law. If you need legal assistance, seek the services of a Wisconsin housing attorney.

NOTE: New law SB107 will change some local laws. These laws are indicated by **bold** or ~~strikethrough~~. These laws may or may not affect you depending upon when the law is signed and when the lease went into effect.

Information in this brochure is only applicable for apartments located in the City of Madison. Other municipalities may require safety features for rental units as well. If you live elsewhere, check the internet or phonebook for your local building inspector and ask about what is required for your area.

Apartment Safety

Whether you are about to move to a new apartment or are already living somewhere in the City of Madison, there are several safety tips you should be aware of and steps you can take to ensure your safety.

Safety Tips

Door Locks, Door Chains, & Dead Bolts

Always lock your deadbolt—both when you leave and after you get home. A deadbolt provides the most security available by a standard lock when used properly. The deadbolt should be at least an inch long. Do not prop your door open or leave it open for friends or roommates.

Window Locks and Ventilation Locks

Always lock your windows. All first floor windows or windows accessible by a platform or fire escape are required to have both regular locks (which do not allow the window to open at all) and ventilation locks (which allow the window to open a few inches for ventilation but not wide enough to allow entry). These locks, when installed and used properly, will not allow entry without breaking glass. If locks are missing or don't work, request repairs.

Key Use Policy

Never label your keys or key chain with your house or unit number. If you lose them, your residence will be at risk. If you need extra sets of keys, ask the landlord. (You may be required to pay a small

deposit for extra keys.) If the locks were not re-keyed before you moved in, you may ask the landlord to do so. (You may have to pay this expense yourself, however, as the landlord is not obligated to change the locks between tenants except in special circumstances.)

Security Locked (Controlled Access) Entrances

Controlled access buildings are only secure if the common doors remain closed and locked when not in use. Remember, if you prop them open, you are compromising the safety of the whole building.

Sliding Door Locks and Secondary Security Devices

Unsecured sliding doors are a common target for unauthorized entry. Be sure your patio door lock mechanism locks securely when closed. A secondary locking device such as a stick can be placed in the sliding track to prevent the door from opening.

Common Area Lighting

Be sure common areas have adequate lighting. If bulbs are burned out, notify the landlord right away.

Window Coverings

Keep your curtains or blinds closed if you are away from home for an extended period of time. Open window coverings make it easy for an intruder to see that you are either not home, or home alone. If window coverings are not provided, ask the landlord if he or she will provide them.

Door Viewer

Always use your door viewer before you open your door for someone. If the door viewer is broken or not provided, notify the landlord immediately.

Check Out the Area Before You Rent

Call the City of Madison Police Department's non-emergency number (608-255-2345) and ask to speak with the neighborhood officer for the area you are thinking about moving into. If possible, walk around the neighborhood yourself and talk with current residents about any safety concerns they have about the area.

Action Steps

1. Note Needed Repairs on Your Check-in Form

~~When you move in to your new apartment in the City of Madison, the landlord is required to give you a written check-in sheet to fill out and return (MGO 32.07(5)).~~ The landlord is required to give you at least 7 days to inspect the dwelling unit and notify the landlord of any preexisting damages or defects. Inspect your apartment for the following safety features:

- Security-locked entrances to common areas
- Deadbolt lock
- Window locks and ventilation locks
- Sliding door locks
- Lighting in common areas
- Door viewer

2. Contact Landlord to Request Repairs

Even if you marked security repairs needed on your check-in form, put repair requests in writing to your landlord, reminding him/her that it is a safety issue. Date the request and keep a copy of it for your own records.

3. Document Needed Repairs

Document the security repairs that are needed by taking pictures and keeping a log of actions you take, like contacting the landlord and calling building inspection.

4. Call Building Inspection

In most instances, the security measures listed in this brochure are required by the City of Madison building code. If your landlord does not respond to your repair requests, notify Building Inspection. In the City of Madison, the number is 608-266-4551.

5. Changing the Locks in an Emergency

In an emergency, where the rental premises or the health and safety of the tenant are at risk, the tenant may change or re-key the locks without prior permission of the landlord. This is the only situation where a tenant may do this. The tenant needs to give