

Rent Happy

Tips to Decrease Stress and Increase Profits

October 2015

Dear friends and valued clients,

There have been several exciting updates here – we've added some 'technological tweaks' to the firm that should improve customer service in future eviction cases. With just the push of a few buttons, I can trigger various e-mails that let landlords know when the case has reached key targets, such as 1) filing the case, 2) serving the tenant, 3) getting the first court date scheduled, and 4) getting the trial date scheduled (if needed). Afterward, I can send follow-up tips from when possession or a judgment is obtained. I've been working on systems within my firm after I read that "SYSTEM" stands for Saves You Stress, Time, Energy, and Money. I agree with that!

Here's my question for your rental property business – what systems do you have in place? When you rent to a tenant, does it always feel disorganized? Do you have policies in place that determine who you rent to, how much security deposit is required in each case, and are safeguards in place so that if something goes wrong, you'll find out as early as possible? Are your legal forms current with existing state law, and will they protect you if the case goes to trial? If your forms need work, that's a quick fix using the free forms on my www.MemphisLandlords.com site. What other tweaks can you add to improve your business?



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Most Common Code Violations

1. Accumulation of Junk, Trash, and Debris

Accumulating junk, trash and other debris on residential property is a code violation. This includes, but is not limited to: discarded items, auto parts, appliances, furniture, building materials, tires, paper, cardboard, plastics or dead limbs or branches. All garbage should be disposed of by putting it in the proper container and placing it on the curb for collection at the appropriate location and time. It is also a violation to allow trash carts to remain on the curb following pick-up.

2. Open Storage of Materials and Furnishings

Storing equipment, materials, or furnishing that is dangerous to public health, safety, or welfare on residential property is a code violation. This may include, but is not limited to, the outdoor use of indoor furniture, outside storage of household appliances, auto parts, or building materials. It is also illegal to dump or discard any debris or material along the roadside or on any unoccupied property.

3. Parking and Storing Inoperable Motor Vehicles

It is a violation to park, store, or leave or permit the parking, storing or leaving of any vehicle which is rusted, wrecked, junked, partially dismantled, inoperable or abandoned upon any property for over ten (10) days unless the vehicle is completely enclosed within a building or stored/ parked in connection with a licensed business or commercial enterprise operating pursuant to law when parking/storing of vehicles is necessary to operate he business.

Source: A Citizen's Guide to a Cleaner Memphis, Memphis City Beautiful

www.MemphisLandlords.com

How Can I Evict a Tenant Who is Dealing Drugs?

First of all, don't try to handle it yourself – either use the process of the courts through an attorney, or use the District Attorney's Office through its Drug Dealer Eviction Program.

The Shelby County District Attorney General's Drug Dealer Eviction Program offers citizens a safe way to help law enforcement identify drug dealers in their neighborhoods.



The Drug Dealer Eviction Program coordinates the efforts of Crime Stoppers, the Memphis Police Department, the Shelby County Sheriff's Department, Memphis Area Neighborhood Watch and local realtors and landlords. The program works like this:

Concerned citizens and neighbors call the confidential Crime Stoppers hotline (901) 528-2274 to report drug dealing in their community. That's all they need to do. They will never be required to testify in court or serve as witnesses for the prosecution.

The police and sheriff's departments screen all anonymous tips and information to identify potential eviction cases.

To gather the needed evidence to evict, law enforcement officers place the suspected property under surveillance and obtain search warrants.

When sufficient evidence of drug trafficking is gathered and presented to the District Attorney's office, the landlord is notified and requested to evict the drug-dealing tenants.

If the landlord fails to start eviction proceedings within five (5) days, the District Attorney's office begins the proceedings. The landlord is then responsible for reimbursing the District Attorney's office for court costs.

If sufficient evidence is gathered, criminal charges are also filed against the drug dealer. Whenever tips lead to eviction or criminal conviction, rewards are paid to the caller or informant.

For more information, contact Jackie Condrey, Program Coordinator at (901) 222-1397.

Community Heroes of the Month

Have you joined Nextdoor.com yet? This site is similar to Facebook except that it is organized by neighborhoods. The site is free to join and you can engage in group discussions with neighbors.

Even though I'm not usually a "joiner" of many online movements, I recently signed up for the Central Gardens Nextdoor group. After reading some of the group discussions, I learned the reason why my neighborhood is so safe – because neighbors share concerns about suspicious loiterers, break-ins, gun shots, strange vehicles, etc., which may prevent a burglary or lead to a successful prosecution. Recently, a very large discussion about identity theft prevented me from using a compromised gas station.

I feel safer knowing that this online neighborhood watch is on the job, and I salute the ones in my community, and in yours! Consider joining the groups not only where you live, but also where you rent!



Source: Photo courtesy of Nextdoor.com