



BLOOMINGTON RENTAL HOUSING COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER FOR RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS AND MANAGERS

December 2019
Bloomington HRA

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THE NEXT MEETING IS ON DECEMBER 12!

All rental housing owners, managers, leasing agents, maintenance staff and other interested parties are encouraged to attend this free Bloomington Rental Collaborative Meeting. This next meeting will take place on **Thursday, December 12, 2019, at 9 a.m., in the Haeg Room at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.** If you have any suggestions for future newsletter or meeting topics, please contact Kathy Warren at 952-563-8942; MN RELAY 711 or e-mail kwarren@bloomingtonmn.gov

December Meeting Topic: Addressing Tenants Who Hoard - Emily Cheesebrow, Resident Support Specialist with Thies and Talle Management, will discuss her experience working with tenants who hoard. (Additional social service staff will be present to assist with discussion and resources.)

HOARDING OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AS A MENTAL DISORDER

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has recently defined Hoarding as a disorder and confirmed what property management companies, owners and Fair Housing practitioners have already known: hoarding is a mental disorder and a protected class. Hoarding has long been considered a disability under Fair Housing laws, and the APA's recognition of it as a mental disorder effectively cements this understanding. Now more than ever, hoarders – who are on the same list of disorders that includes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder – should be treated by property management teams the same as others with mental disabilities. If not treated as such, the property could be subject to penalties and fines for being out of compliance with fair housing laws.

Hoarding has been a hot topic in the property management industry, and is prodding many apartment associations and property owners to seek answers and training to deal with an age old disorder that has gone mainstream. At a recent National Apartment Association Education Conference held in Boston, hundreds attended a meeting to learn about how to handle residents with hoarding tendencies and work within Fair Housing laws. The recent DSM-5 classification punctuates the need for properties to use caution and common sense to try and remedy a

delicate situation.

RESIDENT RETENTION: 4 TIPS FOR HELPING HOARDERS

Property management teams should take a proactive but cautious approach when working with a resident who hoards. Because the situation is considered a mental disability, landlords should generally try to accommodate first. That means closely working with the hoarder to try to find a way to retain residency. Developing and recommending mutual goals might remedy the situation.

Here are some suggested goals to keep in mind when dealing with a hoarder:

1. Initiate and accommodate. Hoarders don't usually ask for accommodation. In fact, many are secretive and their disorders go unnoticed until a neighbor complains or maintenance has to enter the apartment to make repairs. While hoarders should ask for an accommodation, Fair Housing law trends suggest that if a landlord knows or should have known about the disability then there is a duty by the property to accommodate. The cost to hire attorneys to defend a Fair Housing complaint can be expensive, especially if a fair housing enforcement agency finds that the owner should

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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- have tried to accommodate before taking steps to evict. Thus finding an ongoing and workable process to minimize issues is optimal. Be rational, practical and patient in this situation.
2. Avoid eviction. Consider all avenues to avoid evicting the hoarder, including creating and monitoring a plan for the resident to clean up the apartment. The cost for the hoarder or someone close to the situation to clean up an apartment is far less than if the property has to contract for it. Removing belongings (which can include hazardous materials removal) can cost \$10,000-\$30,000.
 3. Create reasonable and safe expectations. Prepare for a long road ahead to the end goal, which needs to be outlined in a written agreement and monitored. For a successful outcome, strive for creating a safe and sanitary environment in the apartment. Don't expect the end product to be

- resemble a page out of a house design magazine.
4. Document the eviction process (if necessary). If the plan doesn't work, the only real option may be eviction. About 39 percent of hoarders succeed with the professional assistance. If the hoarder simply can't or won't comply after reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the situation, property managers and owners should be prepared to defend their case. Document, document, document!

The DSM-5 designation confirms what the multifamily industry has already know about handling hoarders. More importantly, it serve as a reminder that hoarders should be treated the same as other residents with disabilities. Ensure your community stays in compliance with ADA and Fair Housing laws by taking each case very seriously.

Portions reprinted from April 2017 edition of Property Management Insider

PREPARE FOR FALL BY CHECKING CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS AND APPLIANCES

As temperatures continue to fall, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) reminds us to take action to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning send about 372 people to the emergency room in Minnesota during 2017, according to date from the Minnesota Environmental Health Tracking Program. These trips to the ER for carbon monoxide poisoning are preventable when people are prepared.

TO BE PROTECTED FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING, FOLLOW THESE SAFETY TIPS:

1. Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors. Detectors can be purchased at most hardware and big box stores. The change from Daylight Savings time to Standard Time is a good time of year to replace batteries in you detectors and push the "test" button to be sure it's working

- properly. Replace your detectors every five years or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2. Have furnaces and wood-burning stoves inspected annually. Hire a professional to make sure it is functionally sound and vents properly outside the home.
3. Never run gas or propane heaters or a grill inside a home or unventilated garage. Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Use a battery powered detector where you have any fuel burning devices but no electrical outlets.
4. Generators should be run at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home. Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors.
5. Never allow a car to run in an enclosed space. If a car needs to idle, have it backed out of the garage, including underground garages.

FIND BLOOMINGTON RENTAL COLLABORATIVE ON THE WEB

For more local information about housing, check out our website at www.bloomingtonmn.gov, and search "Rental Housing Collaborative." Updated Bloomington Rental Collaborative meeting times and topics can always be found here.