



Not Exactly As Seen on TV

Don't let TV's 'World's Worst Tenants' on Spike TV dictate how you manage your properties. Most of us have seen depictions of landlords on TV and in movies as illimitable in their abilities of ridding of delinquent tenants. Landlords who implement the methods that these shows illustrate for entertainment purposes could find themselves in big trouble. It is absolutely against Landlord-Tenant Law to use "force" to evict a tenant. Locking your tenant out or shutting off the utilities to the unit is very illegal. Using "unofficial" notices to terminate the tenancy is also illegal. An example of an "unofficial" notice would be a 24-hour notice to vacate for an unauthorized pet or noise disturbances. These poor property management practices are not only illegal, immoral, and dangerous, they are also wrecking havoc on the efforts that good landlords have made in combating a negative image.

Landlords can continue making efforts towards combating the ill effects that a reality show "eviction specialist" creates by developing effective habits not only in the manner in which we communicate with our tenants, but also by handling tenant issues in a timely fashion. When's the last time you did a complete inspection of your rental properties from top to bottom, inside and out? Be proactive and maintain control of your investments. Schedule a complete inspection with your tenants at least every 6 months. In the interim, who can you count on to keep watch of your property and notify you of concerning behavior when you aren't around? The neighbors! Employ a couple of the property's neighbors to contact you if they witness any curious behavior.

Let them know that worst case scenario, their testimony may be needed if the information they relay to you ends up in eviction court. To appease some of the neighbor's possible apprehension, send them a thank you note and include a small gift like a coffee gift card. This is an inexpensive, thoughtful, investment for a potentially large return.

Another habit landlords should develop is self-education. Make time to understand and learn how and when to use your states specific legal rental notices when addressing a tenant issue or terminating a tenancy. Depending on the state, there may only be a few different types of termination notices available to landlords. Issuing the wrong termination notice and technicalities are the two most common reasons landlords lose eviction cases. Not only would your case lose in front of a judge, but you could also be liable for damages to the tenant!

The bottom line is never stoop to the level of land lording that the entertainment medias portray. Those extreme acts are unlawful and violating. Are there some bad landlords out there? Of course there are. But there are also bad tenants. The only thing that these landlord-tenant dramas achieve is perpetuating that negative image of landlords. Unlike the actors in 'World's Worst Tenants', leave your anger, frustration, and disparity at the door when dealing with tenants. The only way to lawfully evict a tenant is to go to court, plain and simple.

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5/2013