

Sale of the Unit You Rent



What if My Landlord Sells the Property I Rent?

Normally, if you have a written lease with your landlord, and your landlord sells the property, the new owner is bound to the lease you signed with your former landlord. The new owner cannot change any of the lease terms, including the amount of rent you pay, without your permission.

Beware of the “fake landlord.” Never pay rent to a stranger. Do not pay rent to anyone unless you are sure that the person is either the new owner or someone authorized by the new owner to collect rent. Ask the new owner to show you a copy of the deed to the property. A deed is a document that describes the property. The deed will state the old and new owner’s names. If the new owner will not show you a copy of the deed, you do not have to pay rent to the new owner. When the new owner notifies you of the change and shows you a copy of the deed, this process is called “attornment.”

You cannot refuse to accept a new landlord. If the person claiming to be the new owner (by attornment) proves to be the new owner, or someone authorized by the new owner to collect rent, you have no choice but to pay the rent and should do so immediately.

A copy of the deed for the property you rent can also be found at your local Recorder of Deed's Office, usually located in the city hall.

If you rent month-to-month, the new owner is bound to the terms of your agreement with the old landlord. However, normally the new owner can change the terms of the agreement, or terminate the tenancy, after giving you written notice of the proposed change at least one month before the next rent payment is due.

Prepared by Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc. (LSEM). LSEM provides this educational information as a public service. It is not legal advice. Sometimes the laws change. Always consult a lawyer, if you can, before taking legal action. The mission of LSEM is to provide high-quality civil legal assistance and equal access to justice for low-income people in Eastern Missouri.

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