



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes MNSD, FF

Introduction

This is an application by the Tenant for a monetary order for return of double the security deposit and her filing fee for the claim.

Both parties appeared, gave affirmed testimony and were provided the opportunity to present their evidence orally and in written and documentary form, and to cross-examine the other party, and make submissions to me.

I have reviewed all oral and written evidence before me that met the requirements of the rules of procedure. However, only the evidence relevant to the issues and findings in this matter are described in this Decision.

Issue(s) to be Decided

Has there been a breach of Section 38 of the Residential Tenancy Act by the Landlord?

Background and Evidence

The Tenant paid a security deposit of \$300.00 on August 11, 2010. The Tenant vacated the premises on April 30, 2011. The Tenant provided the Landlord with a written notice of the forwarding address to return the security deposit to, which the Landlord acknowledged receiving and did not sign over a portion of the security deposit.

The testimony of the Tenant was that the Landlord did not perform incoming or outgoing condition inspection reports.

The Landlord testified that she felt she had an honest reason to keep the security deposit. She testified and provided photographic evidence that alleges the Tenant did not clean the rental unit when she vacated.

The Landlord did not make an Application to keep the deposit or to claim for the cleaning of the rental unit.

The Landlord did return a portion of the deposit to the Tenant with a cheque, however, the cheque was not negotiable due to a discrepancy in the amounts written on it.

Analysis

Based on the above, the testimony and evidence, and on a balance of probabilities, I find that the Landlord is in breach of the Act.

There was no evidence to show that the Tenant had agreed, in writing, that the Landlord could retain any portion of the security deposit.

There was no evidence to show that the Landlord had applied for arbitration, within 15 days of the end of the tenancy or receipt of the forwarding address of the Tenant, to retain a portion or all of the security deposit, as required under section 38 of the Act.

By failing to perform incoming or outgoing condition inspection reports the Landlord extinguished her right to claim against the security deposit, pursuant to sections 24(2) and 36(2) of the Act.

The Landlord has breached section 38 of the Act. The Landlord is in the business of renting and therefore, has a duty to abide by the laws pertaining to Residential Tenancies.

The security deposit is held in trust for the Tenant by the Landlord. At no time does the Landlord have the ability to simply keep the security deposit because they feel they are entitled to it or are justified to keep it.

The Landlord may only keep all or a portion of the security deposit through the authority of the Act, such as an order from a Dispute Resolution Officer, or the written agreement of the Tenant. Here the Landlord did not have any authority under the Act to keep any portion of the security deposit. Therefore, I find that the Landlord is not entitled to retain any portion of the security deposit.

Conclusion

Having made the above findings, I must Order, pursuant to section 38 and 67 of the Act, that the Landlord pay the Tenant the sum of **\$650.00**, comprised of double the security deposit (2 x \$300.00) and the \$50.00 fee for filing this Application.

The Tenant is given a formal Order in the above terms and the Landlord must be served with a copy of this Order as soon as possible. Should the Landlord fail to comply with this Order, the Order may be filed in the Small Claims division of the Provincial Court and enforced as an Order of that Court.

This decision is made on authority delegated to me by the Director of the Residential Tenancy Branch under Section 9.1(1) of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

Dated: September 01, 2011.

Residential Tenancy Branch