



Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

DECISION

Dispute Codes MNSD

Introduction

This is an application by the tenants for a monetary order for return of double the security deposit, and the 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.

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 tenants paid a security deposit of \$425.00 on July 1, 2010. The tenants vacated the premises on January 31, 2012. On February 7, 2012, the tenants provided the landlord with a written notice of the forwarding address to return the security deposit to, and did not sign over a portion of the security deposit.

The testimony of the tenant was that the landlord did not perform an outgoing condition inspection report.

The testimony of the landlord was that he did not return the security deposit, and did not file an application to retain a portion of the security deposit.

Analysis

Based on the above, the testimony and evidence, and on a balance of probabilities, I find that the landlord has 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 also 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 of the security deposit.

By failing to perform an outgoing condition inspection reports the landlord has extinguished their 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 or interest.

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 \$900.00, comprised of double security deposit (\$850.00) on the original amounts held (\$425.00), 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: March 19, 2012.

Residential Tenancy Branch