



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 Tenant for a monetary order for compensation under the Act and for return of the security deposit and the filing fee for the claim.

The Tenant served the Landlord with the Notice of Hearing and Application for Dispute Resolution by registered mail, sent on April 19, 2012, and deemed received under the Act on April 23, 2012.

Preliminary issue

The tenants have filed for compensation under the Act, which is regarding the return of overpayment of utilities paid to the landlord. The tenants have withdrawn that portion of their claim and have leave to reapply.

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 \$600.00. The Tenant vacated the premises on March 13, 2012. The Tenant provided the Landlord with a written notice of the forwarding address to return the security deposit to.

The tenant testified the landlord returned only \$100.00 of the security deposit and they did not agree to sign over any portion of the security deposit.

Analysis

Based on the above, the testimony and evidence, and on a balance of probabilities, I find that the Landlords are 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, plus interest.

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, plus interest.

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.

Section 38(6) provides that if a landlord does not comply with section 38(1), the landlord must pay the tenant double the amount of the security deposit. The legislation does not provide any flexibility on this issue.

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 \$1,250.00, comprised of double the original amount of the security deposit (\$600.00), and the \$50.00 fee for filing this Application. The landlord has returned to the tenant \$100.00. Therefore, the tenant is granted a monetary order in the amount of **\$1,150.00**.

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: June 15, 2012.

Residential Tenancy Branch