



Dispute Resolution Services

Page: 1

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, the interest 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 at the hearing.

The parties confirmed receipt of all evidence submissions and there were no disputes in relation to review of the evidence submissions

I have reviewed all evidence and testimony before me that met the requirements of the rules of procedure. I refer only to the relevant facts and issues in this decision.

Issue(s) to be Decided

Is the tenant entitled to a monetary order for return of double the security deposit?

Background and Evidence

The tenant paid a security deposit of \$200.00 at the start of the tenancy which began September 2012. The tenant vacated the premises on November 4, 2012.

The tenant testified that she tried to contact the landlord by phone to request her security deposit, however, the landlord was avoiding any contact with her. The tenant stated on November 16, 2012, she wrote a letter to the landlord requesting the return of her security deposit and sent it by regular mail to the landlord address. The tenant stated the letter was not returned by Canada post. Filed in evidence is a copy of the letter dated November 16, 2012.

The tenant stated she also sent an additional copy of the letter to the landlord by registered mailed on March 22, 2013, which was enclosed with her application for dispute resolution.

The landlord denied receiving any letter from the tenant in November 2012. The landlord agreed he received the tenant's letter dated November 16, 2012, requesting the return of her deposit, which included her forwarding address with the tenant's application for dispute resolution.

The landlord stated he did not make an application for dispute resolution within 15 days of receiving the tenants forwarding address seeking to retain the security deposit.

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, 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.

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 an Arbitrator. 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 \$450.00, comprised of double the security deposit (\$200.00) on the original amounts held, 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: May 10, 2013

Residential Tenancy Branch