



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 return of double the security deposit, and to recover the cost of the filing fee for the landlord.

Although served with the Application for Dispute Resolution and Notice of Hearing by registered mail sent on April 3, 2013, Canada post tracking numbers were provided as evidence of service, the landlords did not appear.

Section 90 of the Act determines that a document served in this manner is deemed to have been served five days later. I find that the landlords have been duly served in accordance with the Act.

The tenant appeared, gave testimony and was provided the opportunity to present their evidence orally and in written and documentary form, and to make submissions to me.

Issues 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 \$940.00 at the start of the tenancy which began September 1, 2012. The tenant vacated the premises during the third week of February 2013.

The tenant testified that on January 28, 2013, he provided the landlord in person with a notice to end tenancy and in that notice the tenant provided the landlord with his forwarding address. The tenant stated he later provided that in a text message.

The testimony of the tenant was that the landlord did not perform neither incoming nor outgoing condition inspection reports.

Analysis

Based on the above, the undisputed 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 landlords could retain any portion of the security deposit, plus interest.

There was also no evidence to show that the landlords 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 incoming or outgoing condition inspection reports the landlord have 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 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 landlords are not entitled to retain any portion of the security deposit or interest.

Section 38(6) of the Act 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 pays the tenant the sum of **\$1,930.00**, comprised of double the security deposit (\$940.00) 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: June 19, 2013

Residential Tenancy Branch

